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OBSERVATIONS

ON

TACITUS.

IN WHICH

His CHARACTER as a WRITER

AND

An HISTORIAN,

Is impartially considered, and compared with
that of *LIVY*.

By the Reverend *THOMAS HUNTER*,
VICAR of *Garstang* in *Lancashire*. *K*



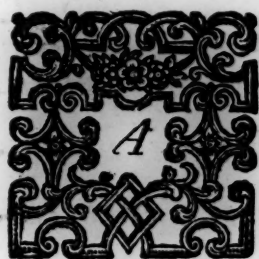
L O N D O N :

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P R E F A C E.



AMONG the ancient Writers who have engag'd the Attention, and shar'd the Applause of the learned World, the Author here observ'd upon, has not been esteem'd the most inconsiderable. He has been translated into most of the European Languages, and illustrated by the Labours of the most learned Criticks of different Nations. He has been the

*School of Statesmen, and the Study
and Delight of Kings.*

*From the Encomiums given him by
some of his Admirers, one might indeed
imagine him the most extraordinary
Genius in the World of Letters, and
but one Degree remov'd from Inspira-
tion, if not inspir'd.*

*But Praise or Censure carried to
Excess, bear strong Marks of Suspici-
on, as generally proceeding from Pas-
sion, or Prejudice, rather than Truth.
In the Case of Writers, one might ex-
pect their Merit would be try'd with-
out Partiality; especially the Merits
of a Writer, so many hundred Years
in his Grave; and to whom it may be
supposed, none of his Commentators,
dead or living, have had, or can have
any personal Relation, or Party-Pre-
judice. Yet still the learned World
continues*

P R E E A C E

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continues divided in their Opinion of the Merit of this Writer. The following Observations, which occur'd upon the Perusal of his Works, are therefore offer'd to the Publick with a Design to contribute something towards settling his true Character as a Writer, and an Historian.

In this Enquiry, the Author is not content to give general Encomiums or Censures at large; but refers to Passages, Facts and Characters quite through the Writer; not thinking that some beauteous or fine Thoughts, without Regard had to the Manner of their being introduced, and the Justness of their Application, are sufficient to justify the Applause given him by other Writers; or that a few Faults in a Work so extensive can support the Charge he brings against him.

I have only to add, that as this Writer has been commonly quoted on the Side of Infidelity, if, upon Examination, his Merit be not found so extraordinary, nor his Authority so weighty, as has been generally admitted, or contended for; some small Service may seem done by this Essay to the Cause of True Religion.

E R R A T A.

PAGE 19. line 25 read *produce*. p. 23. l. 21. r. *Offices*.
 p. 24. l. 19. for *his* r. *this*. p. 25. l. 19. r. *herettable*.
 p. 30. l. 9. r. *Basilick*. p. 31. l. 19. r. *veteri*. p. 35. l. 7.
 r. *Quinctii*. l. 9. r. *Drusus*. l. 13. r. *Alban*. p. 45. l. 3.
 r. *describe*. l. 9. r. *Night*. p. 50. l. 2. after *Country* no
 Stop. p. 72. l. 10. r. *secuta*. p. 79. l. 9. r. *say*. p. 87. l. 10.
 for *when a* r. *whence*. p. 89. l. 16. after *Tumults* a Comma.
 p. 91. l. 11. r. *there*. p. 97. l. 23. r. *unmerciful*. p. 98. l. 13. r.
fears. p. 104. l. 9. & Note r. *Xiphilin*. p. 109. l. 8. r. *any*.
 p. 120. l. 16. r. *opiniative*. p. 122. Note, for 800. r. 800.
 p. 143. Note l. 2. for *is* r. *are*. p. 144. l. 12. dele *that be*.
 p. 145. l. 17. r. *these*. p. 150. l. 17. r. *subtilly*. p. 151. l.
 22. r. *Abitophbal*. p. 152. l. 5. & 8. r. *Italus's*. p. 153. l.
 5. r. *neque Galli*. l. 7. r. *Tencherians*. p. 192. Note, r. *prol*.
 p. 201. l. 11. r. *seat*. p. 206. l. 18. r. *or Spect*. p. 213. l.
 13. dele *the*. p. 215. l. 7. r. *till the Sur*. p. 216. l. 16.
 & p. 217. l. 15. r. *arbitrarily*. p. 217. Note, r. *prol*. p. 230.
 Note, l. 2. r. *lingua*. p. 238. l. 5. r. *Craft*. p. 259. l. 3.
 r. *scholastic*. p. 285. l. 19. r. *'tis Nature*. p. 288. l. 6. r.
presumptuous. p. 290. l. 26. r. *of Fact*.

I N T R O-



INTRODUCTION.

O the following Observations was intended to have been prefix'd a Dissertation on History, in order to justify the Censure here pass'd upon *Tacitus*; but upon second Thoughts, and a Perusal of what had been already written on this Subject, particularly by *Lucian* among the Ancients, and by *Strada*, *Vossius*, *Le Moyne* and *Rapin* among the Moderns; all future

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Attempts of the same Kind seemed in a great Measure useless. The common Sense of the Reader, is therefore principally appealed to; and indeed, Laws of History, and Rules of Criticism, not founded in common Sense, are Matters rather of Speculation and Curiosity, than of any great Advantage to the Writer, or the Reader. In Composition it may be difficult to say, What is the utmost Perfection, and how far the Powers of Genius may extend? but a Deviation from that common Standard of what is regular, just and fit, which we have from a kind of instinctive Sagacity, or natural Perception, is more easily observable. A good Ear, and a good Eye, will discern Irregularity, and perceive a Dissonance, tho' the Critic may be no Professor of any Art.

Thus

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Thus in History, what is monstrous and affected, a departure from Truth, from Nature, and decency of Character, will readily strike a Mind intelligent and sober, tho' unequal to the arduous Task of a Writer, and not acquainted with the formal Rules of just Composition. An irregular or bad Historian, is perhaps more exposed to Censure, and easier to be convicted of a Failure in his Art, than either a Poet, or a Philosopher. In the former, Historic Truth is not of the Essence of his Work: And Philosophic Truth, which is the Province of the latter, is often of so abstracted a Nature, as to escape even a diligent Enquirer. But History being a Recital of Fact, the Foundation and Subject whereof is Human Nature; the Power of which we experimentally feel and know, a blot here is sooner discovered.

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ver'd. No Powers of Genius can recommend to our serious Belief what is false and fabulous. Where Truth and Nature, the great Exemplars, are over-look'd, or over-charg'd, the Piece, tho' labour'd with the utmost Art, must appear ridiculous.

As these are the Subject and Ground-Work of History (for otherwise it would be Romance) so its End is Instruction; for Pleasure seems rather the End of Poetry. An Historian must therefore be a wise Man; qualified either for the Cabinet, or the Camp. Mere Narration would be a Journal, not a History. Yet he must not be always reflecting and moralizing; for then he would depart from his proper Character, and assume the Moralist and Politician. He must too be a good Man; otherwise, he will but entertain, when he should instruct;

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instruct ; and fill the Head, rather than improve the Heart.

The Style is what may be call'd the Dress, and should be such as may justly express, or modestly adorn the Truth, which is, as it were, the Body of History. The fewer Decorations in an Historian the better. Ornament, when too much affected, hides, rather than sets off natural Beauty. Art is offensive, except when it conceals itself, and looks like Nature. Studied Composition, and labour'd Description may strike the Imagination, or, like Dress, amuse the Fancy ; but Truth, like Beauty, reaches the Soul, and moves all that is human within us. It is the Historian's Perfection to represent this properly. Here indeed, the main Difficulty of his Province lies. The Quarry is common to all ; but to give the rough Materials the proper

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proper Polish, and to dispose them in just Order, requires a masterly Hand. Truth, as it appears in all the different Scenes, which compose the Historic Drama, in the different Characters that present themselves, and pass before us on the Stage, is not easily conceived, or expressed. To comprehend, so as fully to display, the Penetration of the Statesman, the enterprizing Soul of the Heroe, the Firmness of the Patriot, the Eloquence of the Senator, the Nature of the various Passions of Mankind, and the Effects of different Fortunes on the Human Mind, requires the most universal Genius, and a Capacity as extensive as Nature, and all its Appearances in the Moral World.

Besides the Peculiarity, which distinguishes the different Characters and Actions of Men, and which must be
carefully

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carefully attended to; great Regard must be had by the Historian to the general Order, and Disposition of his Work. It must, tho' distinct and clear, be connected and of a Piece; not abounding with superfluous Ornaments, and unnecessary Descriptions. His utmost Art must be laid out on the principal Figures of his Piece, and yet these are not to be over-crowded. Too many Actors will breed Confusion. Lesser Characters and common Actions should be cast into Shades, that the most distinguish'd may appear in the fullest Light.

I will but observe further, that an Historian must, above all Things, be an honest Man. By Honesty, I mean not what every Writer or Prater on the favourite Side of a Question will call such, a Zeal for his Party; but the direct contrary, Impartiality. Men
and

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and Characters, Vice and Virtue, Wisdom and Folly, are only to be described so far as they affect the public Measures and common Happiness of a Nation. The honest Historian will be an equal Enemy to Faction and Flattery, unbias'd in his Censures of the Living and the Dead, and at the farthest Distance from personal Malice, or Party-prejudice. A Stroke of Calumny must destroy the Credit of the Writer, and much more a settled Malignity. Should a Painter of a malicious Turn betray his Disposition in all his Pieces, and give to Innocence a childish Simplicity, to native Modesty a despicable Meanness, to the Eye of Wisdom an Air of Craft: Should he make the Gay mad, and the Serious melancholy, he would but ill consult either his Credit or his Interest.

Upon

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Upon these few Principles we presume to say, that *Tacitus* is not a just Writer, tho' we allow him a great Wit. He is void of Candour, wants Judgment, exceeds Nature, and violates Truth. He may be instructive, but is less so, because not agreeable. We acknowledge his extraordinary Parts, which are sadly abus'd by a superior Vanity.



OBSER-

INTRODUCTION

Under the few principles we pre-
sented to you, that which is not a rule
We think, that we allow him a great
We think is not of the same, wants
We think, that we allow him a great
We think, that we allow him a great
We think, that we allow him a great
We think, that we allow him a great
We think, that we allow him a great
We think, that we allow him a great

THE END

CHAS. D. W.



OBSERVATIONS
ON
TACITUS.

PART I.

CHAP. I.



O Vanity may we not ascribe his tedious Digressions and frequent Excursions into remote Ages and distant Nations, which have little or no Connection with the *Roman* Story, or the Times, which he proposes as the Subject of his Writing?

I remember not to have met with any Objection to *Tacitus* on this Account, which I

B

am

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am the more surpriz'd at, as the Affectation here is so very apparent. He lets slip no Opportunity, but catches at any little Hint, and makes forc'd Connections to run back into Antiquity, to give his Work the more venerable Air, and at the same Time display his own deep Erudition.

In one Place you have the Antiquities and Wonders of *Egypt*, the *Nile*, the *Canopus*, the *Grecian Menelaus's* Arrival here, the most ancient *Hercules*, the huge Obelisks, King *Rhameses*, and his famous Conquests, the Revenues of this once opulent Kingdom, the Pyramids, and artificial Lakes ^a.

And not content with this upon another Occasion (*Claudius's* adding new Letters to the *Roman* Alphabet) we are immediately carry'd back to the *Egyptian* Hieroglyphicks, and entertain'd with the various traditionary Opinions of the Origin of Letters; and so of course expect to hear of the *Phœnician Cadmus*, the *Athenian Cecrops*, *Linus* the *Theban*, *Palamedes* the *Argive*, *Simonides*, *Damaratus* the *Corinthian*, and the *Arcadian Evander* ^b.

And as *Egypt* is an inexhausted Subject, and affords endless Matter for a speculative

^a Ann. 2. c. 59, &c.

^b Ibid. II. c. 14.

Antiquarian, we have, in the fourth Book of his History, a further Account of some of its most ancient Gods, and superstitious Trumpery, upon a very ridiculous Occasion, *viz.* *Vespasian's* working Miracles by the Power of the God *Serapis*.

Yet *Egypt* was too narrow a Province for the Display of our Author's Knowledge in Antiquity. The Cities of *Asia* and *Greece* must therefore be brought upon the Stage, petitioning the Senate for the Privilege of a Sanctuary, or Leave to erect a Temple, that the fabulous Absurdities of every Country may have the Honour of being descanted upon by our learned Annalist. Hence are intermix'd with the *Roman* Story, the big-belly'd *Latona*, and her Offspring, the slaughter'd *Cyclops*, the suppliant *Amazons*, the *Lydian Hercules*, *Diana Trivia*, the *Persian Diana*, the *Paphian Venus*, the *Salminian Jupiter*, with *Teucer*, the Son of *Telamon*^c.

Upon the Competition between the *Lacedemonians* and *Messenians*, for the Right that each People claim'd to the Temple of *Diana Limenetis*, the former Produce, as Proofs of their Title, the ancient Authority of their Annals, and the Hymns of their Poets. The

^c Ann. 3. c. 61, &c.

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Messenians plead the ancient Partition of *Peloponnesus* amongst the Descendants of *Hercules*^d.

So again upon the Cities of *Asia*, contending for the Honour of building a Temple, we hear of the Wars of *Perseus* and *Aristonicus*, the City of *Troy*, famed for the Glory of its Antiquity, *Tyrrhenus* and *Lydus*, (whence the first Names and Settlements of the *Lydians* and *Tyrrhenians*) *Tantalus*, the Son of *Jove*, *Theseus* of divine Race, *Pelops* and his Colonies, and the *Amazons* once again^e. — Circumstances of no very great Moment, bordering on, or much obscur'd by Fable, and as little deserving, one would imagine, the serious Attention of a *Roman* Senate, as the Writer's or the Reader's Notice.

Being to relate the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, he immediately sets himself to recount the Original of the *Jewish* Nation, and at once steps back to the Times of *Saturn's* Expulsion from his Kingdoms: From the powerful Influence of whose Star, and because most of the heavenly Constellations finish their Course by Sevens, the *Jews*, we are told, hallow or observe the seventh Year^f.

^d Ann. 4. c. 45.

^e *Ibid.* 4. c. 57, 58.

^f Hist. l. 5. c. 2.

Thus

Thus seriously, and with great Ostentation of deep Erudition, does *Tacitus* relate the Extravagancies of Poets and Mythologists; most of which, it is well known, are so far from being true, and consequently so little worthy of the Historian's Regard, that they are generally the most absurd Falshoods, and direct Corruptions of civil History.

How much better does *Xiphilin*, the Abridger of *Dion Cassius*, acquit himself upon such an Occasion as this before us! After relating the taking of *Jerusalem* by *Pompey*, he adds, " I am wholly unacquainted with the Original
" of the Name of the *Jews*, tho' it is well
" known to all those who observe their Laws,
" tho' Natives of another Country. The
" *Romans* have often lessen'd their Number,
" and yet they have multiplied so extreamly,
" that it is not now in the Power of Laws to
" extirpate them. Their Customs are quite dif-
" ferent from those of other Nations; for be-
" sides their particular Way of Living, they
" adore none of the common Deities. They
" acknowledge but one, whom they worship
" with great Respect, and to whom they ren-
" der very great Honours. There never was
" any Image in *Jerusalem*, because they be-
" lieve their God to be invisible and ineffable.

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“ In a Word, the religious Worship with
 “ which they serve him, surpasses that of all
 “ other Nations. They have built him a
 “ Temple of prodigious Greatness and Beauty,
 “ and which is very remarkable in this, that
 “ it was open on the Top, and had no Roof.
 “ The Day, which bears the Name of *Saturn*,
 “ is sacred with them; and among other Cere-
 “ monies they observe upon that Day, they
 “ abstain from all Manner of Labour. So
 “ much for what relates to their God. To
 “ say who he is, when he began to be wor-
 “ shipped, and with what Devotion they serve
 “ him; besides that several Authors have treat-
 “ ed of it, is no Part of this History.”

Upon mentioning the *Iberians* and *Alba-*
nians, wild Foresters of *Parthia*, they must
 be made more considerable by their Descent
 from *Jason*, who could not be mentioned,
 but *Medea* must attend him with the Oracle
 of *Phryxus* and his Ram^h: Tho’ these *Ibe-*
rians were, after all, no better than *Orodes* re-
 presents them, — *ignobilem Hiberum mercenario*
Milite.

The Antiquity of the Isle of *Coos*, of *Byzan-*
tium, and its first Plantingⁱ: the History of the

g *Xiphil.* translated by *Manning*, Vol. I. p. 13, 14.

h *Ann.* 6. c. 34.

i *Ibid.* 12. c. 61, 63.

Temple of *Venus* in the Isle of *Cyprus*^k, (for which Digression he prepares the Reader with some Decency, by mentioning the amorous Soul of *Titus*, who makes the Visit to it;)—the Oracle of the Clarian *Apollo* at *Colophon*^l, are tedious and romantick Digressions; and nothing but the Antiquity of the Places has invited our Author to lay himself out, and spread all his Knowledge of the Fable and Absurdity, which without these Opportunities had been lost to the World.

Nay, not only ancient Kingdoms and Cities, long since buried in Ruins, but the fam'd Deeds, and heroic Actions of Antiquity, are frequently recall'd to the Memory of the Reader; tho' this intemperate intermixing with his own Story those memorable Exploits, instead of adding Ornament, does but disgrace the inconsiderable Transactions, which are the Subject of his Annals.

The ancient Officers, ancient Rites, and ancient Laws, are recounted with all the Accuracy and Diligence of one, who should profess to write the *Roman* Antiquities.

The *Pomærium* must be enlarg'd *more priscom*^m; that thence the Annalist might have an Opportunity of descanting upon the original

^k Hist. l. 2. c. 2, 3. ^l Ann. 2. c. 54. ^m *Ibid.* 12. c. 23.

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Situation of the City and its consequent Improvements: As upon the Capitol's being burnt down, you have the History of it from its Foundation^a.

Upon the Place of *Flamen Dialis* being vacant by the Death of *Servius Maluginensis*, you have an insipid Discourse from the Emperor upon the ancient Custom of Confarreation; (*prævetustas Cereemonias*, as one of the Commentators calls it.) This Discourse of the Emperor's seems more impertinent, as the Son here immediately succeeded the Father; and the Senate, notwithstanding the Emperor's Interposition, agreed to make no Change from the original Institution^o.

When the Consul *Dolabella* propos'd that an Entertainment of Gladiators should be annually exhibited by the Quæstors, we have a long Account of the Institution of his Office; and the Consulship and Dictatorship are lugg'd into the Account^p.

Upon the Death of *Lucius Piso*, Governor of the City, we have the History of this Office in the Times of the first Kings, *Romulus*, *Tullus Hostilius* and *Tarquin*; under the Consuls, and in the Time of *Augustus*^q.

^a Hist. l. 3. c. 71.

^p *Ibid.* 11. c. 22.

^o Ann. 4. c. 16.

^q *Ibid.* 6. c. 11.

If the tranſient Mention is made of the Punishment of ſome Crime, or a Law to reſtrain any Enormity, you have immediately a Reſearch backwards into the Progreſs of the Crime, or the various Modulations of the Law, from the Foundation of the City to the preſent Time.

Upon the qualifying the Law *Poppæa*, he goes back to the Original of Laws in general, and deſcribes their Progreſs; and ſo we are informed of the Laws of *Minos*, *Licurgus*, *Solon*, *Numa*, *Tullus Hoſtilius*, *Ancus Martius*, and *Servius Tullius*; and thence down to *Augustus Cæſar*^r.

The Impropriety of this Way of Writing will eaſily appear by ſuppoſing a learned Hand employed in Writing the Tranſactions of the Year 1748; and who, upon mentioning the Law diſſolving the heritable Jurifdictions of *Scotland*, ſhould go back to the Original of Laws in general; and moralizing at large, like our Annaliſt, ſhould thence deduce the ancient Laws of *France*, *Spain*, and the *Empire*, concluding with the Laws of *Malcolm*, and the moſt ancient *Scottiſh* Kings; none of which had any Relation to the Law diſſolving the heretable Jurifdictions. We might poſſibly ad-

^r Ann. 3. c. 26, &c.

mire his Learning and Acuteness; but should think them more properly employ'd in separate Dissertations upon those speculative Subjects.

Thus again upon some Thoughts entertain'd of composing the War between *Otho* and *Vitellius*, we have a Digression upon the Growth of Ambition with the Increase of the Empire. However, to do our Author Justice, supposing an Impropriety here, or in the Account of the Original of Laws, 'tis amply made amends for by the Truth of his Remarks, and his fine Reflections.

The old obsolete Laws relating to Usury, are with more Propriety quoted at a Time, when the Iniquity of the Usurers was the Subject of the Senate's Debate^f.

Ancient Precedents are recited, and the primitive Manners of *Rome* frequently introduc'd, when little of the ancient Discipline was retain'd in the Army, and none of the ancient Virtue among the Citizens. Most of the Debates in *Tacitus's* Accusations, or Defence of Criminals, are supported by Precedents from Antiquity.

No Phrases are more common with him than *priscus Mos*—*vetus Mos*—*vetere more*—*more*

^f Ann. 6. c. 16.

prisco—repetitus ex vetusto mos^t. In the Army you have a Decimation *ex vetere memoria*^u, and a Civic Crown^w. Provinces are allotted *vetere ex more*. *Tiberius* and *Claudius* are both great Antiquarians. *Claudius*'s Representation to the Senate concerning the College of Sooth-sayers, the most ancient Discipline of *Italy*, will appear to many no better than Impertinence. The Reason he gives for his Application to the Senate upon this Occasion, is, that the Common-wealth was ever wont in Times of Calamity, to have Recourse to those of that Science. Was this the Case now? The direct contrary: *Læta quidem in præsens omnia*. Nor do we find any Decree of the Senate, in Consequence of this Representation of *Claudius* to the Senate, worthy remembring or recording^x.

Again, when the same *Claudius* confirms the Jurisdiction of the Imperial Procurators, we have the Regulations of *Augustus* upon this Subject, the popular Ordinances of the Tribune *Sempronius*, the Establishment of *Servilius* the Consul, and hence the bloody Wars of *Marius* and *Sylla*, with the Power of *Oppius* and *Balbus*, under the Dictator *Cæsar*^y.

^t Ann. 3. c. 31. *Ibid.* 2. 34, 85, 32. *Ibid.* 4. 26, &c.

^u *Ibid.* 3. c. 21.

^w *Ibid.* 12. c. 23.

^x *Ibid.*

11. c. 15.

^y *Ibid.* 12. c. 60.

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Tacitus is equally ambitious in the Characters he draws, or the Actions he relates, of forming them to ancient Models, and a Resemblance of ancient Heroism. *Tiberius* is a Prince *antiquæ parcimoniae*: *Agrippina*, Wife of *Germanicus*, is *unicum Antiquitatis specimen*: *Torquata* is *priscae sanctimoniae Virgo*². *Germanicus* must be both *Alexander* and *Scipio*. *Tiberius* refuses to have *Arminius* taken off by Poison; by this equalling in Glory, says the Annalist, the ancient *Roman* Generals, who rejected, and disclos'd a Plot to poison King *Pyrrhus*³. Upon the taking of *Caractacus*, it is compared to *Scipio's* taking *Syphax*, or *Paulus's* taking *Pyrrhus*⁴. Upon mention made of *Tacfarinas*, a Deserter and a Robber, we are reminded of the Ravages of *Spartacus*; when the Commonwealth was engaged in the mighty Wars of *Sertorius* and *Mithridates*⁵. So the *Gladiators* attempting to escape from *Præneste*, tho' immediately master'd, revive the Terror of *Spartacus* and the publick Miseries of old⁶. *Civilis* must be another *Sertorius*, or *Hannibal*⁷. When *Maroboduus* surrenders himself, *Tiberius* is made to tell the Senate,

² Ann. 3. c. 4, 69, &c.

³ Ibid. 2. c. 87.

⁴ Ibid. 12. c. 38.

⁵ Ibid. 3. c. 73.

⁶ Ibid.

15. 46.

⁷ Hist. 1. 4. 12.

that

that never had *Philip* of *Macedon* been so terrible to the *Athenians*, nor *Pyrrhus*, nor *Antiochus* to the *Roman People*^f. *Claudius* accepts the Submission of *Mithridates*, after the Manner of the ancient *Romans*^g. *Blæsus* must have the Badges of Triumph, and be saluted *Imperator* (*prisco erga Duces honore*) for defeating *Tacfarinas*, who was at last routed by five hundred Men^h. A Victory even over Women, weak and unwarlike, is *clara & antiquis Victoriis par*ⁱ. *Antonius* defending himself for the Destruction of *Cremona*, pleads the greater Mischief and Misery that former civil Wars had brought upon the Republick^k. *Pætus*, when block'd up by the *Parthians*, quotes the *Luculli*, the *Pompeys*, & *si qua Cæsares obtinendæ donandæve Armæniæ egerant*^l. Who would not imagine the Man was here Conqueror, or at least not conquered? Nor can his Troops surrender to *Vologeses* without justifying themselves by the Example of the two old *Roman Armies* at *Caudium*, and *Numantium*^m. If a Brother slays his Brother, it was so, says our Historian, & *prioribus Civium Bellis*; and we are referr'd to the Times of *Cinna*ⁿ. If *Vitellius* makes a Consul for a Day, we are told,

^f Ann. 2. 63.

^g Ibid. 12. 20.

^h Ibid. 3.

21, 72, 74.

ⁱ Ibid. 14. 37.

^k Hist. 3. 53.

^l Ibid. 15. 14.

^m Ibid. 15. 13.

ⁿ Hist. 5. 51.

so it was under the Dictator *Cæsar*^o. *Galba* adopts *Piso*, after the Manner of the deified *Augustus*^p. If *Trebellienus Rufus* is made Guardian of the Kingdom of *Thrace*, for the Sons of *Rhometalces* and *Cotys*, who are Minors, it must answer the Example of *M. Lepidus*, sent by the Senate, Guardian of the Children of *Ptolemy* in *Egypt*^q. *Lepidus* repairs the Basilisk of *Paulus*, a peculiar Monument of the *Emilian* Family; and in doing this, he must be supposed to have followed the Example of *Taurus Philippus* and *Balbus*^r. *Nero* delights in Musick; *quod Regibus & antiquis Ducibus factitatum*^t. And Objections seem purposely started against his Youth and Inexperience, to make Room for the Reply, That *Pompey*, in his eighteenth Year, and *Octavius Cæsar*, in his nineteenth, each sustain'd the Weight of a civil War^t; as if the Excursions of the *Parthians* into *Armenia*, and their Hostilities against *Rhadamistus*, threaten'd equal Danger to the Republick, as the Times of *Pompey* and *Cæsar*; or *Nero* had given any Specimens of a military Prowess, which might promise him a Rival of those distinguish'd Generals.

^o Hist. 3. 36.

^p Ibid. 1. 20.

^q Ann. 2. 27.

^r Ibid. 3. 72.

^t Ibid. 14. 14.

^t Ibid. 13. 6.

Nay, the ancient Republic, (a Reproach and Scandal to the Age of which he is writing the History) is appeal'd to in a controverted Affair by those, who could scarce, one would imagine, have mention'd it without a Blush^u. And an infamous Informer, *Marcellus Epirus*, has the Effrontery to plead for ancient Institutions^w; when the very Name of ancient *Rome* should have struck dead with Shame such enormous Offenders against its Customs and Manners.

The Barrenness of his own Subject, I will suppose, as well as his Vanity, might put *Tacitus* upon making these frequent Excursions into the more distinguished Æras of the Republic: For as to the Causes he assigns for referring to Antiquity, they are by no means answer'd in the Instances produc'd, or the Examples quoted. *Sed hæc & alia ex veteris memoria repetita, quotiens Res Locusque exempla Recti; aut solatia mali poscent, haud absurde memorabimus^x.*

Under this Head I cannot but observe how eager *Tacitus* is to celebrate a Descendant of one of the ancient Families of *Rome*, tho' frequently distinguished for nothing but Guilt. A *Gracchus*, one of *Calphurnian* or *Emilian* Blood, cannot be mentioned, tho', perhaps a

^u Ann. 11. 23

^w Hist. 4. 8.

^x *Ibid.* 3. 51.

Person

Person of the most infamous Character, but you are reminded of their illustrious Race; as if to dignify their Crimes, and raise Pity for their Sufferings; when an honest Indignation had been better express'd, in order to raise the same Passion in the Reader, against Actors of the most horrid Villainies, and Corrupters of some of the best Blood that ever flow'd in human Veins. You have a *Regulus* and *Africanus*, tho' no better than Informers^y. The Death of the profligate *Mamercus Scaurus*, must be celebrated as becoming the Dignity of the ancient *Emilii*^z. The infamous and guilty *Lepida*, we are told, was Great-grand-Daughter to *Pompey* and *Sylla*; and so must be introduc'd into the Theatre to invoke her illustrious Ancestors, especially the great *Pompey*, whose Statues were round in view; the Theatre itself a Monument of his raising^a. When *Cn. Domitius* and *Vibius Marfus* are accus'd as Adulterers and Associates with the infamous *Albucilla*, you are sure to be told of their Eminence, noble Descent, and the ancient Honours of their Family^b. *Claudius* cannot condemn *Lollia*, without relating who was her Mother, her Uncle and Great Uncle; which, considering the signal Splendor

^y Hist. 4. 41. 2.^z Ann. 6. 29.^a *Ibid.* 3. 23.^b *Ibid.* 6. 47.

of her Birth, were probably as well known to the Senate, his Audience, as to himself^c.

Many of *Tacitus's* Characters are so insignificant, that he is obliged to recite the Actions of both Father and Grand-father to ennoble the Son, who would otherwise have been unworthy of our Notice. Thus upon mentioning *Domitius*, we are told of his Father's Power at Sea in the Civil War, and of his changing Sides; and that his Grand-father fell in the Battle of *Pharsalia*^d. *Furius Camillus* is celebrated for his Virtues, and as deriving his Descent from *Camillus*, *Reiperator Urbis*; where the Annalist, erroneously passes over two Branches of the Family, that he may bring in *Camillus* the most ancient and the most distinguish'd of the Race^e. *Messala*, Colleague with *Nero*, and a pensionary Consul must be celebrated, not for one Action, during his Office, worthy of Remembrance, but because some few old Men (and but very few) remember'd his Great grand-father, *Corvinus* the Orator, to have been Colleague in the same Magistracy with the Deified *Augustus*, who by one Degree more remote was Ancestor to *Nero*^f.

^c Ann. 12. 22.

^d *Ibid.* 4. 44.

^e *Ibid.* 2. 52.

^f *Ibid.* 13. 34.

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Nay, Ancestry, where famed for superior Crimes, must have a Place in his Characters, and Writings: As if the Parents Crimes ennobled the Descendants. The Death of *Anthony* had scarce been mentioned, but for his Race greatly illustrious: His Father having been put to Death for Adultery with *Julia*. What an odd Circumstance is it in the Character of *Sabinus*, that his Great grand-mother had play'd the Whore with *Julius Cæsar*?

At the same Time that Actions are condemn'd or commended according to their Conformity to, or Abhorrence from, the Models and Precedents of Antiquity, without regarding, whether Antiquity was always in the Right or not, and Characters and Persons are ennobled for their long Descent, tho' their Ancesters might be as famous for Guilt as Greatness, true Nobility is scarce allow'd its Merit for want of this Stamp of Antiquity. Thus *Asinius Agrippa* is mentioned as descended from Ancestors more illustrious than ancient^h.

Nor is our Author content with telling you from what distinguish'd Progenitors most of his Actors are descended; but if a simular Name comes a-cross, he must acquaint you to what ancient Family, it does *Not* belongⁱ.

^z Hist. 4. 55.

^h Ann. 4. 61.

ⁱ Ibid. 3. 48.

The Death and Funeral of any Person of ancient Descent is frequently attended with a History of the Family, or some Pomp and Imagery of Antiquity. Thus when *Junia* dies, the Wife of *Cassius* and Sister of *Brutus*, twenty Statues of the noblest Families, the *Manlii*, the *Quinellii*, and other Names of equal Lustre were carried before the Funeral^k. So upon the Death of *Deusus*, most signal was the Splendor of the Funeral in a conspicuous Procession of Images, when at it appear'd in a pompous Train, *Cneus* Father of the *Julian* Race, all the *Albon* Kings, with *Romulus* the Founder of *Rome*; next the *Sabine* Nobility, *Attus Clausus* and his Descendants of the *Claudian* Family^l.

I cannot conclude this Chapter without observing, that the Fault here objected to *Tacitus*, is in some Degree chargeable upon our divine Poet, *Milton*; who is too pompous and affected in the Display of his Learning; tho' the Dignity and Majesty of his Subject, which he wonderfully supports, as he is supported by it, excites in you a venerable Awe and Reverence to all he says.

^k Ann. 3. 75.

^l *Ibid.* 4. 9.

C H A P. II.

NEXT to this Affectation of dabling in Antiquity, one may presume to call *Tacitus's* Description in Question; as being overlabour'd, unnatural, and sometimes even mean. He is too ambitious of Pomp and Ornament; yet the Reader is unaffected, notwithstanding all the Pains and studied Expression of the Writer. What *Tacitus* sets off with most Ostentation is least natural, just, or true; like the Encomium of *Germanicus* by *Tiberius*: And what he says as it were *en passant*, with his natural Brevity and Energy, is in some Respects like the same *Tiberius's* Praise of *Drusus*, most sincere, and consequently affecting. His Grandeur is frequently romantic. He describes not as Things really are, but gives them undue Proportions, and annexes unnatural Circumstances, to strike and amaze the more. He leaves Nothing to the Reader to imagine. All is enlarg'd and magnified even beyond the Bounds of Nature and Decency. Whether he describes the Works of Art, or the Products of Nature, Actions, Passions, or Persons, they must have something strange or great to command more Notice, and raise the Merit of our Author's Writings.

If

If a Tempest is described, it is such a one as never happen'd before ^m : — At no Time else did Thunder roar, or Lightning shoot with such Fierceness and Frequencyⁿ. If it is an Earthquake, there is *non solitum in tali Casu Effugium*^o. Is it a Frost? It is such a one as is not often heard of, and describ'd by Sentry's dying, Limbs utterly shriveld, and Hands dropping off by the raging Cold^p. Is it a Fire? It wastes and destroys *ultra solitum*^q. — And in another Place, it is *omnibus quæ huic Urbi per violentiam ignis acciderunt, gravior atque atrocior*^r. If it is an Attack, as that of Cremona, it is a Task new and immense^s. Does the Tiber overflow? It is *immenso Auëtu*^t. The Euphrates in *immensum tollitur*^u. The Rhine empties itself into the Ocean *immenso ore*^w.

As a Specimen of our Author's Description, I shall here give the Reader a Tempest of his Drawing, as translated by Mr. Gordon, who, it must be allow'd, has here done his Author Justice.

“ The Sea at first was serene; no Sound or
“ Agitation but from the Oars or Sails of a

^m Ann. 2. 23.

ⁿ Ibid. 15. 45.

^o Ibid. 2. 47.

^p Ibid. 13. 35.

^q Ibid. 4. 64.

^r Ibid. 15. 38.

^s Hist. 3. 24.

^t Ibid. 1. 86.

^u Ann. 6. 36.

^w Ibid. 2. 6.

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“ thousand Ships; but suddenly a black Host
 “ of Clouds pour’d a Storm of Hail; furious
 “ Winds roar’d on every Side, and the Tem-
 “ pest darken’d the Deep, so that all Prospect
 “ was lost; and it was impossible to steer: The
 “ Soldiers too, unaccustom’d to the Terrors of
 “ the Seas, in the Hurry of Fear disorder’d the
 “ Mariners, or interrupted the skilful by un-
 “ skilful Help: at last the South Wind master-
 “ ing all the rest, drove the Ocean and the
 “ Sky: The Tempest deriv’d new Force from
 “ the windy Mountains and swelling Rivers of
 “ *Germany*, as well as from an immense Train
 “ of Clouds, and contracting withal fresh Vi-
 “ gour from the boisterous Neighbourhood of
 “ the North, it hurl’d the Ships, and toss’d
 “ them into the open Ocean, or against Islands
 “ shor’d with Rocks, or dangerously beset with
 “ cover’d Shoals. The Ships by Degrees with
 “ great Labour and the Change of the Tide
 “ were reliev’d from the Rocks and Sands, but
 “ remain’d at the Mercy of the Winds: Their
 “ Anchors could not hold them: They were
 “ full of Water, nor could all the Pumps dis-
 “ charge it: Hence to lighten and raise the Vef-
 “ sels swallowing at their Decks the invading
 “ Waves, the Horses, Beasts, Baggage, and
 “ even the Arms were cast into the Deep.

By

“ By how much the *German* Ocean is more
 “ outrageous than the rest of the Sea, and the
 “ *German* Climate excels in Rigour, by so
 “ much this Ruin was reckon’d to exceed in
 “ Greatness and Novelty. They were en-
 “ gag’d in a tempestuous Sea, believ’d Deep
 “ without Bottom, vast without Bounds, or no
 “ Shores near but hostile Shores: Part of the
 “ Fleet was swallowed up: Many were driven
 “ upon remote Islands void of human Culture,
 “ where the Men perish’d through Famine,
 “ or were kept alive by the Carcasses of Horses
 “ cast in by the Flood: Only the Galley of *Ger-*
 “ *manicus* landed upon the Coast of the *Chau-*
 “ *cians*, where wandering sadly, Day and
 “ Night, upon the Rocks and prominent
 “ Shores, and incessantly accusing himself as
 “ the Author of such mighty Destruction, he
 “ was hardly restrain’d by his Friends from
 “ casting himself desperately into the same hos-
 “ tile Floods. At last with the returning Tide,
 “ and an assisting Gale, the Ships began to re-
 “ turn, all maim’d, almost destitute of Oars,
 “ or with Coats spread for Sails, and some
 “ utterly disabled, were dragg’d by those that
 “ were less.” The Men glean’d up after
 the Wreck, recounted Wonders at their Return,
 “ the Impetuosity of Whirlwinds: Wonderful

“ Birds: Sea-monsters of ambiguous Forms between Man and Beasts” *visa*, adds the Annalist, *five ex Metu credita*^x: Upon which last Words *Lipsius* notes, *imo nec visa, nec credita, sed vanitate efficta*.

How simple and unadorn'd is the Scripture Style upon such an Occasion as this? “ But as “ they sailed, they fell asleep: And there came “ down a Storm of Wind on the Lake, and “ they were filled with Water and were in “ Jeopardy.” I would further refer the Reader to the Shipwreck of *St. Paul*, as described by *St. Luke*^z: By the Justness and Sincerity of which he will discern the false Sublime and extravagant Manner of our Annalist.

Nor can I think *Tacitus* more just and temperate in his Description of Persons and Passions, than of Things. *Agrippina* is *ingens animi*: *Civilis* is *ingens rerum*: *Bardanes* is *ingens Gloria*: *Corbulo* is *ingens Corpore & verbis magnificus*: *Ostorius* is *ingenti Corporis Robore*. *Antiochus* is *opibus ingens*^a; where *Lipsius*, out of Ignorance, as it should seem, of our Author's manner, would raise *ingens* out of the Text. *Vitellius's* Soldiers are describ'd *ingentibus telis horrentes*: So *Civilis's* Troops *immensis Corporibus & praelongis hastis*: The Friends

^x An. 2. 21. 2.

Mark 4. 37.

^y See Luke 23. Matt. 8. 24.

^z Acts 27.

^a Hist. 2. 81.

of *Vitellius* in order to defend *Placentia* prepare *immensas Lapidum Ærisque Moles*^b. Of those that had been imprison'd and were executed on the Score of *Sejanus's* Friendship, there lay, says the Author, *immensa Strages*. Now this immense Havock or Carnage, according to *Suetonius*, consisted of Twenty. *Viginti uno die abjecti tractique*^c.

Here *Lipsius* imagining his Author's poetic Figures to be no more than pure historic Truth, in order to confirm his *immensa Strages*, alters the Text of *Suetonius*, and without the Authority of one manuscript or printed Copy substitutes a Thousand in the Room of Twenty.

Tacitus would surprize you with the Wonderful; but often shocks you with the Improbable. He would astonish you with the Terrible, but you smile at the founding Absurdity. He is always aiming at the Extraordinary, which frequently proves Extravagant. He would raise Mole-Hills into Mountains, and Mobs into Rebellions. Every Wind must be a Tempest; and Skirmishes he calls Battles. The Impudence of a Slave, or the Devastations of a Robber must threaten a Revolution in the State. Numbers are magnified, and Difficulties aggravated, to dignify his Battles and

^b Hist. 2. 21.

^c *Sueton. Tiber. c. 61.*

ennoble his Victories. If a Band of Free-booters is but defeated, the Soldiers must return *cover'd with Glory*^d. Again, the *Romans* crossing the River *Panda*, besiege the City of *Uspes* situated upon a Hill, and fortified with Walls and Trenches, or Moats. Dreadful City, and mighty Undertaking! for the Author adds, that these Walls were rais'd " of Rows of Hurdles
 " with Earth between." Yet the taking of this paltry Place with the promiscuous Butchery of the miserable Inhabitants, is represented in most magnificent and pompous Colours;
 " as striking Terrour into the neighbouring
 " Nations, who now believ'd that Nothing
 " could be secure or impregnable against the
 " Romans; *since Arms and Bulwarks,*
 " *Heights and Fastnesses, deep Rivers and*
 " *fortified Towns were with equal Bravery*
 " *vanquish'd by them*." Upon *Zorcines* King of the *Soraci* (a wandering People, according to *Strabo*, living in Tents and employ'd in Agriculture) prostrating himself before the Image of *Claudius*, *signal*, we are told, *was the Glory of the Roman Army*; " who had
 " advanc'd in a Course of Victory without
 " Blood within three Days Journey of the
 " River *Tanais*^f." Now was not this a

^d Ann. 12. 37.^e *Ibid.* 12. 16.^f *Ibid.* 12. 15.

Journey, or at best a March, rather than a Campaign? Thus again, after taking the City of *Rome* by the Soldiers of *Vespasian*, there remain'd the Camp to be attack'd; which surely could make no mighty Defence after the City was taken Sword in Hand, the Bulk of *Vitellius's* shatter'd Party rooted, and himself fled: Yet all the Inventions used in attacking the strongest Cities must be apply'd, the military Shell, missive Engines, Mounds and flaming Torches. “ In this single Undertaking, they all cry'd, would be compleated, “ whatever Hardships, whatever Perils they “ had in so many Battles undergone. To the “ Senate and People their City was restored, “ to the Deities their Temples: It was in the “ Camp that the peculiar Lot and Glory of “ the Soldiery resided: This was their Country, here their Household and their Household-Goods: These they were now instantly “ to regain, or pass the Night under Arms”. Publick Sentiments and spirited Resolutions to come from the same Men, who immediately before are described as indulging in luxurious Bathings and Feats of Riot: — As unconcern'd and enjoying a Security perfectly inhu-

* Hist. 3. 84.

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man, nor for a single Moment postponing their Pursuits of Pleasure !

When *Agrippina* leaves the Army, what a dismal Affair does the Annalist make of it? *Multo cum fletu muliebri & miserabile Agmen—lamentantes conjuges—velut in Urbe victa facies gemitusque ac planctus*^h. Now might not we ask in the Words of *Tacitus*, *Quis ille flebilis Sonus? Quid tam triste?* Why truly this Affair in the main, this tragical, super-tragical Business is real Matter of Joy ; *Agrippina* is delivered from an Army mutinous, and Violaters of every human Law.

The Passions in *Tacitus* are generally carried on to an Excess. Whether 'tis Joy or Sorrow, all is in Extremes, and rarely confin'd to what Nature best loves, Mediocrity. Anger is Madness: Fear is Consternation, Paleness Trembling and Floods of Tears: Courage is *Ferocia & Ardor*. *Germanicus* is one while for Stabbing, another for Drowning himself: *Agrippina* is violent in her Grief, and a Stranger to Patience: *Nero* is, *ut Latitiæ ita Mæroris immodicus*. *Pomponia Græcina* changes not her Weeds or mournful Spirit for forty Years togetherⁱ. *Lipshus* saw something extraordinary in this; and so without any Authority cuts short

^h Ann. I. 40.

ⁱ *Ibid.* 13. 32.

the Term, substituting *quatuordecim Annos* for *quadraginta*.

When our Author would ascribe the Sycophancy paid to *Sejanus*, we have the People and Nobles of *Rome*, (*eques, patres, magna pars plebis*) making their Addresses on the Shore of *Campania*: Noble and ignoble all in a Body, lying along on the Fields and Shores, Day and Nights, no Distinction of Ranks, the Business all the same, and bearing with equal Patience the Favour and Insults of his Porters, till they were at last forbid even to apply to them^k.

To describe the Fear of the *Roman* People upon *Sabinus*'s being led to Execution, we are told, that wheresoever he turn'd his Eyes, whithersoever he directed his Words, nought appear'd but the Effects of universal Terror, *viz.* Flight and Solitude: All along as he pass'd the People disappear'd, the Streets were empty, the publick Places deserted: There were some, who, having fled return'd, dreading this very Thing, that they had discover'd Dread^l.

Both of these Descriptions seem to have more the Air of poetical Hyperbole, than strict historic Truth.

^k. Ann. 4. 74.

^l. *Ibid.* 4. 72.

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The Death of *Germanicus*, I own, is told movingly enough, if any Thing is amiss, he seems to die too pompously. His dying Speech is without Dispute very fine: But seems better fitted for some theatrical Heroe quitting the Stage with the most labour'd Language and studied Sentiment, to engage the Attention and Applause of the Audience.

Upon this and other Occasions of the same kind, which occur in our Author, you naturally think of *Bayes's* Princess *Lardella*, who composes a Copy of Verses just as she is dying, to be pinn'd on her Coffin.

Only the first part of *Germanicus's* Speech is a little unmanly, and rather apt to raise our Indignation against the Gods, than Pity for the Man. *Otho*, the debauch'd, voluptuous *Otho*, is represented as much more a Man and a Philosopher upon this last and trying Occasion; and *Cato* himself, in the immortal Monument rais'd to his Memory by our Countryman Mr. *Addison*, makes not a greater Figure.

When the Fleet appears that bore *Agrippina*, and the Remains of *Germanicus*; instantly, says the Annalist, were fill'd not the Port alone, and adjacent Shores, but the Walls and Roofs as far as the Eye could go, with the sorrowful Multitude: They were consulting one from one,
how

how they should receive her landing, whether with universal Silence, or with some Note of Acclamation.

This I cannot help thinking is somewhat improper and unnatural. Real Sorrow consults not Forms: It breaks out into instant Expressions, and awaits not the cool Deliberation, calm Reasoning, and Propriety of Action and Decorum, which are all suppos'd drown'd in the Tumult of Passion.

On the Day, on which the Urn of *Germanicus* was deposited in the Tomb of *Augustus*, the Symptoms of public Grief were now the Vastness of Silence: Now the Uproar of Lamentation: The City in every Quarter full of Processions: The Field of *Mars* on a Blaze of Torches: Here the Soldiers under Arms, the Magistrates without the *Insignia*, the People by their Tribes, all cried in Concert, that the Common-wealth was fallen. And indeed who could imagine otherwise from all this publick Sorrow? Who would not think that a second Battle of *Cannæ* was newly reported, and the Fall of Liberty and Empire in view?

Agrippina landing makes such a Figure, as might naturally be expected from the Stage. 'Tis the Pomp of Sorrow and Ostentation of Grief. *Rizpah*'s mournful Conduct for her slain

flain Sons is exprefs'd in one Verſe of ſacred Writ with more affecting Strokes, than we feel from all this outward Ceremony and detail of Circumſtances, which attend *Agrippina* with her Huſband's Urn. “ And *Rizpah* took Sack-
 “ cloth, and ſpread it for her on the Rock, from
 “ the Beginning of Harveſt, until the Water
 “ dropped upon them out of Heaven: And
 “ ſuffered neither the Birds of the Air to reſt
 “ on them by Day, nor the Beaſts of the
 “ Field by Night^m.

Again, the Circumſtance of naming her Son by *Phineas*'s Wife has ſomething in it greater, and at the ſame time Natural, than any Thing ſaid of the Death and Sufferings of our Author's moſt celebrated Perſonages executed by *Nero*; tho' the Writer endeavour'd all in his Power to dignify his Characters, and ennoble their dying Moments. “ And about the Time
 “ of her Death, the Women that ſtood by her
 “ ſaid unto her, Fear not; for thou haſt born
 “ a Son. But ſhe answered not, neither did ſhe
 “ regard it.—And ſhe nam'd the Child *I-cha-*
 “ *bod*; ſaying, the Glory is departed from
 “ *Iſrael*; becauſe the Ark of God was taken,
 “ and becauſe of her Father-in-Law and her

^m 2 Sam. 21. 10.

“ band. And she said, the Glory is departed
“ from *Israel*, for the Ark of God is taken ⁿ.”

To give but one Instance more of the natural Imagery of Sorrow as painted in the Scriptures, how short, yet affecting, is the Conduct and Complaint of *Reuben*, when he found not *Joseph* in the Pit? “ He rent his Cloaths, and
“ returned unto his Brethren, and said, the
“ Child is not; and I, whether shall I go? ⁺

As *Tacitus* thus attempts to raise little Things by a Pomp of Description; so in other Parts of his Works, he would dignify Meanness, and cover the blackest Crimes with the false Colours of Language.

Julia condemned for Adultery is reckoned *inter Adfectos* ^p. The Author speaks rather with Pity for her Sufferings, than Detestation of her Guilt.

When *Silius* desires a speedy Death, *the same Constancy*, adds the Annalist, *possessed several illustrious Roman Knights eager for Execution* ^q.

A Body of ancient Heroes ready to rush into the thickest Battle, (like the *Grecian* Chiefs when offering themselves to explore the Enemies Camp ^r) or by their Deaths, like *Cocles*,

ⁿ 1 Sam. 4. 20, 21, 2.

^o Gen. 37. 29, 30.

^p Ann. 4. 71.

^q Il. 11. 35.

^r Ann. 10.

Curtius, and *Scævola* to deliver their labouring Country. A Martyr with Immortality in his Eye, could not make a greater Figure than this Adulterer-convict with his Pimps and Accomplices.

If *Tacitus* is any where happy in his Description, it is in the Display of guilty Greatness. Luxury refined and high-flavoured, Royal Debauch, Imperial Whoredom, seem as much adapted to his Pen, as *Livy* is charmed with the virtuous Part, with the amiable Glory of the temperate *Scipio*, or the illustrious Poverty of the rural Dictator. Never Writer had a happier Pen at describing Wickedness than our Author. It is the most natural Part of his Writings. Were we to give Room to the Suspicions, we shall have presently occasion to blame in *Tacitus*, we should say, he might have been an Adviser and an Actor in every villainous Design, and a Party in every lewd Scene he represents.

Messalina's guilty Amours with *Silius* are described with a gay and festive Air, with that Pride of Voluptuousness, and feeling Taste of Pleasure, as shew the Writer well versed in Court-Intrigues. The Description is too luscious, and may lead others to a Perpetration of the Crime, rather than an Abhorrence of the Criminals.

Criminals. It may be allowed Natural and Fact, and as such related by the Annalist; but Nature and Fact had better be pass'd over in Silence than debauch the Readers Mind. When Truth is on the Side of Virtue, let it be displayed in its naked Simplicity, or in the fairest and fullest Colours; but such guilty Scenes as *Messalina's* had better have been for ever buried in Oblivion.

The Story of *Sagitta* and *Pontia* is well told, *i. e.* is told in Language natural enough; but this black Deed, as well as the former, had much better have been concealed from the Eyes of the Reader. And how does this Scene of Adultery and Murder become the Dignity of the *Roman* Nation? Or, is this one of those illustrious Actions which he proposes to make the Subject of his Annals? *Sagitta* was a Tribune of the People, *Pontia* a private Woman: What had this to do with the Publick? If such Transactions as these are worthy of the Historian's Pen, a Sessions-paper may rise to that Dignity.

The Story of *Sabina Poppæa*, which follows in the next Chapter is more agreeable to History, as having some Relation to the Pub-

^t Vide Ann. 13. 31.

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lick. *Majorum Reipublicæ malorum initium fuit*, says *Tacitus*.

Poppæa's Character, I mean her Person is delicately drawn; but in too engaging Colours for corrupted Nature to view with Innocence, at least with Improvement.

Our Author's Conduct is somewhat like that of the Painter, who in a Piece I have somewhere seen, has laid out all his Genius, and employed the utmost Efforts of his Art, to adorn *Potipher's* Wife with all the Charms of Beauty, and bedecked her Bed with every soft Elegance, which a luxurious Fancy could imagine proper for a Scene of Dalliance. If there is Guilt, it is in the virtuous Boy, whom (did you not know his Story) you would imagine a Thief, and flying from his Pursuers.

How happy is it, when Genius is employed in the Cause of Virtue; when History is made a School of Manners, and the Mistress of Temperance? As a Contrast to our Author's lewd Characters, what a lovely Figure does *Livy's Scipio* make? His Treatment of *Allucio* and the captive Maid, is the most gallant and virtuous in the World, and might well gain him the Character of the *God-like* Youth. His Advice to *Massanissa* needs no Recommendation. Let the rankest Debauchee, who has a Grain

Grain of Virtue left, peruse it and condemn it if he can. *Nulla earum Virtus est, qua ego æquæ atque temperantia ac continentia Libidinum gloriatus fuerim. Hanc te quoque ad cæteras tuas eximias virtutes, adjecisse velim. Non est, non, (mibi crede) tantum ab hostibus armatis, ætati nostræ periculum, quantum ab circumfusis undique voluptatibus. Qui eas sua temperantia frænavit ac domuit, næ multo majus Decus majoremque victoriam sibi peperit quàm nos Syphace victo habemus*^t.

Had such Treatment of captive Beauty, and such Advice as this to *Massanissa*, come from the bearded Sage, and the gray Severity of Years, we might have suspected it as proceeding from Impotence, or Ill-nature, rather than Self-Denial, or a Love of Fame, or Virtue. But to be sensible of Pleasure, yet unconquered by it, — in the full Bloom of Youth, yet able to controul the Passions, — a Conqueror, and yet resign the Rights of Conquest, tho' Youth and Beauty were the Prize, and all this Sacrifice for *Rome* and Glory, is such an Instance of exalted Virtue, as has not been often equalled^u.

D 3

Here

^t *Liv. L. 30. c. 14.*

^u I am not unaware that a Man of modern Gallantry will set very light by this Virtue of Chastity; and willing to expunge it from his System of Morals, or to recommend
the

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Here again I am reminded of the Scripture Hero *Joseph*: But must own I think the Virtue of *Scipio* more illustrious. *Joseph* could not have gratified his Mistress's Passion without transgressing the Laws of both God and Man, and without Danger of incurring the Displeasure and Vengeance of both; but *Scipio* had not those Restraints of Conscience, or the Fear

the Violation of it with a better Grace to Christian Princes, may deny its Existence or Reputation among the ancient Heathens. The Virtue of *Scipio* celebrated in this Instance, has particularly been attempted to be traduced by a noble Author upon the Authority of a Fragment of *Antias Valerias*. But (without considering how far modern Manners may misguide us in our Searches after moral Truth and Virtue) is it probable that *Livy*, who 'tis plain had carefully studied and compared the older *Roman* Historians, should be so ignorant, or so wilfully blind to Truth as to forge this Part of *Scipio's* Conduct; and forge it against the express Testimony of other credible Historians extant in his Time? Such a Supposition would not only destroy his Credit with Respect to *Scipio's* Character throughout, but the Characters of his other Actors. It is well, however, that *Polybius* (L. 10.) supports our Author in this, as in many other of his Relations. As for the Authority of *Antias Valerias*, it was so little deserving to be quoted on this Occasion, that *Livy* has not thought it worth mentioning, though he had in the Chapter immediately preceding, cited him, which he does frequently, as a Writer distinguished for his Lies and Credulity. *Vide Liv. Vol. 4. p. 57, 70, 78, 181, 204. Vol. 3. p. 245. Vol. 5. p. 213, 24, 39, &c. &c. Ed. Oxon.*

of human Laws to bind him: The Captive was the Conqueror's Right ^w.

But that I may not seem on this Occasion to set too high a Value on the *Roman* Story, or to prefer profane before sacred Writ, I am obliged to add, that I think the History of *Joseph* taken together far exceeding every Thing of the historic Kind in *Grecian* or *Roman* Literature. It is impossible for a Heart not dead to the most natural Impressions of Humanity to read this Story without a melting Tenderneſs. *Joseph* is still alive in this inimitable Draught of human Nature and human Manners. The Composition is without Art or Ornament, it is plain Fact and Nature, with which we are yet more moved, than with all that Parade of Grief, that laboured Extravagance of Description, that Pride of Wit, and Enumeration of Ceremony and Circumſtance, which our Anna-

^w Since the above was writ, a learned Friend upon the Peruſal has hinted to me the oſtentatious Part that *Scipio* ſometimes acted: *Non veris tantum Virtutibus mirabilis, ſed Arte quoque quadam ab Juventa in Oſtentationem, earum compoſitus*, Liv. L. 26. 19. which I find confirmed by *Polybius* in this Inſtance of his Conduct; ſo that when I conſider and compare with it the honourable and conſcientious Part of the Patriarch, the Sollicitations of his Miſtreſs, and the Privacy with which, to all human Appearance, he might have perpetrated the Crime, I am afraid to ſtand to the Preference I have given above to the virtuous *Roman*.

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list would have employed upon such an Occasion, to work upon the Passions of his Reader. I may be forgiven while I dwell a Moment longer on this short History.

Joseph's cruel Treatment by his Brethren and *Potipher's* Wife raises our Indignation and Pity; as his youthful Wisdom and filial Piety had before gained our Favour and good Wishes. His Imprisonment, and the chief Butler's Forgetfulness of his friendly Interpreter make us angry and impatient; as his Deliverance and Exaltation give us Satisfaction and Triumph of Heart. His affected Cruelty to his Brethren, interrupted by his Sorrow for the Perplexity he saw them in from the Consciousness of their Guilt, gives us the pleasing Image of imaginary Justice against intended Wickedness, while the Tenderness of the Judge, not able to go through the Sentence against the Criminals, without Tears for the Agony of Brothers, melts us down into Compassion and Pity. His flying from the Eyes of Men to throw off the Load of Tenderness, that overwhelmed him at the Sight of his Brother *Benjamin*, quite unmans us; we are no more ourselves, nor able to confine that Excess of Tenderness which hurries us away to lament with *Joseph* in his Chamber.

Judah's

Judah's Address to Joseph in Behalf of Benjamin is made up of the tenderest Strokes to move Pity and conciliate Favour. "What shall we say unto my Lord? or, What shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves?" express the last Distress and Confusion. The Mention of *Israel* his Father, under the Character of *an old Man*, and of *Benjamin*, as the Child of his old Age — a little one, whose Brother was dead, who was left alone of his Mother, whom his Father loved — and who, if he should leave his Father, his Father would die — is a Recapitulation of such Circumstances, as must pierce through the Formalities of Greatness, make an Emperor forget his Royalty, and remember himself a Man, concerned in some of these Relations.

Joseph's bursting into Tears from a Fullness of Heart, before he could make that short, but comprehensive and striking Declaration, I am *Joseph*; followed by that natural and familiar Question, "Doth my Father yet live?" The guilty and distracted Silence of his Brethren, struck Dumb by this Discovery as by some sudden Terror, or Bolt from Heaven; his familiar and endearing Approach to them, ascribing their Treatment of him to the Direction of Providence; — his filial Concern
for

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for *Israel*, and honest Pride in the imagined Happiness of a Father from a Son's Glory ; — his Weeping upon *Benjamin's* Neck, and *Benjamin's* weeping upon his Neck, are all told in such lively Colours, as were never equal'd by any human Composition. The deepest Scene I have met with in Tragedy, never affected me so much as this plain prose Narration and Recital of pure Fact in the sacred Penman. It shakes your whole Frame ; and he that can read it without Emotion is a Monster, not a Man.

But to return to our Author's Description. As the royal Excesses of *Nero* are well described, the Relation joyous, and a gay thoughtless Madness could not be better painted ; so the Horror of a guilty Soul is (allowing for a little poetical Hyperbole) represented with true Sublimity in his retiring to *Naples* from the Prospect of that deadly Sea, and those tragical Shores, which had been Witnesses to his Mother's Murder, and which incessantly reproach'd him. “ Besides that, there were those (says “ the Annalist) who believed, that from the “ high Cliffs and Hills round about were “ usually heard the shrill Sound of Trumpets, “ and Shrieks and Wailings from *Agrippina's* “ Grave. *”

* Ann. 14. 10.

How wonderfully sublime is this in the Sense in which I suppose it is to be taken ! The dismal Prospect of the Sea and Shore was in *Nero's* Soul. Guilt blackened all about him, and formed the Trumpet among the Hills, and the Shrieks heard from his Mother's Tomb.

Besides these poetic Liberties, and an affected Grandeur, which give the Writings of *Tacitus* too much the Air of a Romance, and perhaps got him the Title given him by some of his Admirers of *Romanorum magnificentissimus*, there are other Faults I cannot but censure in his Descriptions; their being too *General*, and yet too *Particular*; which may at first Sight appear inconsistent, but, I believe will, upon Examination be found true.

Sir *H. Savil* has more than once charged our Author with Negligence in his Descriptions; but I rather think his Fault or his Misfortune was Ignorance. He is *General* for want of knowing the real Circumstances of many an Action he relates, as Battle, Siege or Assault ; and so is obliged to make up the Description with such Circumstances as generally enter into such an Action. If it is a Deluge, Fire, Pestilence or Shipwreck that is the Subject, he goes at large into whatever may be supposed to make up such a Scene in its worst
Appear-

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Appearance, without confining himself to the particular Misery and Loss of the present Misfortune.

For instance, if it is a Battle, we are told they fought *cominus eminusque — collato gradu, corporibus umbonibusque niti, omisso pilorum jactu, gladiis & securibus, galeas loricasque perrumpere, noscentes inter se, cæteris conspicui — in Eventum belli certabant.* I desire the *English* Reader to consider how such a Description would sound in the History of our own Country. “ They fought Hand to
“ Hand, and at a Distance — now close Body
“ to Body, and Shield to Shield, now laying
“ aside Fire-arms, with Swords and Pikes,
“ known to each other, and conspicuous to
“ the Rest — and all for the Victory,” I refer the Reader further to a Battle between the *Partbians* and the *Sarmatæ*, *Ann.* 6. 35, &c.

If the Reader would see the Impropriety of such general Descriptions, let him peruse any of *Cæsar*’s Battles as described by himself, or one of our own unhappy civil Engagements as described by the Lord *Clarendon*. I refer him to the Battle of *Pharsalia* in the first, and the Battle of *Edge-Hill*, with the second Battle of *Newbury* in the latter.

Again,

Again, the Attack of *Placentia* by *Cæcina*¹, I think faulty for the same Reason; and to justify my Sentiments desire the Reader to compare it with the Attack of *Bristol*, as related by the Lord *Clarendon*, and the Siege of *Marseilles* in *Cæsar*.

For the Description of a Pestilence, of a Battle by Night, and another in Morass and flooded Grounds: I refer the Reader to *Ann.* 16. 11. *Hist.* L. 4. c. 27. and 15. where he will find such general Circumstances related, as usually attend such Actions or Calamities; and which any one might almost describe as well, that knew no other Circumstance but that there was a Pestilence, a Battle by Night, or an Engagement in a Morass.

It is difficult to make Fiction look like Truth, or to invent naturally. Affected and pompous Descriptions are apt to raise Suspicions of an Author's Sincerity. "All un-
" adorn'd Narratives (says a great Judge) which
" have nothing to surprize, may be thought
" to carry some Presumption of Veracity²." The amiable and illustrious Author of *Ta-lemachus*, having not Truth for his Foundation, it may be easily observed how his Description labours. Imitations of the ancients,

¹ *Hist.* L. 2. 72.

² *Analogy of Religion.* Part 2. 7.
poetic

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poetic Images and hyperbolical Exaggerations supply the Place of Fact. This is not alledg'd against the great Author, as abusing his Reader ; his Work, I mean the historical Part, not being impos'd upon the World for Truth, but professedly writ upon the Plan of Fable. Observe then his Description of a Battle. “ The
 “ Horizon look'd ruddy with the Sun's earliest
 “ Rays, and the Sea was brighten'd with the
 “ Flames of the rising Day. All the Coast
 “ was fill'd with Men, Arms, Horses, and
 “ Chariots ; which being in Motion made a
 “ confused Noise like that of the angry
 “ Waves — And now *Mars* begun by the
 “ Noise of Arms and the terrible Preparations
 “ of War to disseminate Rage in every Heart.
 “ The Field was crowded with bristling Pikes
 “ thick set like a Crop of Corn.—There soon
 “ arose a Cloud of Dust, which intercepted both
 “ Heaven and Earth from the Eyes of Men :
 “ Darkness, Horror, Bloodshed and inexora-
 “ ble Death advanc'd apace.—Then follow-
 “ ed a thick Cloud of Javelins, and Arrows,
 “ darken'd the Air, and covered all the Com-
 “ batants. Nothing could be heard but the
 “ doleful Cries of expiring Mortals, and the
 “ Clattering of Arms of those that fell in the
 “ Conflict. The Earth groan'd beneath the
 “ large

“ large Heaps of dead Bodies : Streams of
“ Blood ran guttering down on every Side.
“ There appear’d no longer among this con-
“ fus’d Medley of enraged and blood-thirsty
“ Men, any thing but Slaughter, Revenge,
“ Despair and brutal Fury *.”

This I think is pretty much in our Author’s manner. Thus in the *Tempest* before quoted, you find every Circumstance that generally concurs to render this Scene of Misery as terrible as possible.

I deny not the Truth of the Facts in general, *viz.* That there was a Battle, a Tempest, an Attack of this or that fortified City : Or, that the Event upon the whole prov’d otherwise than the Author asserts ; but the Particulars of the Action, or Manner of bringing it to the End or Event, appear to have been much unknown to him.

In his Characters I think *Tacitus* is equally faulty. If he introduces an Informer or a Traytor, he is such a one as might be found in any State, at any Time. The Author copies from Nature in general, and what she dictates in a common Way ; not marking that Peculiarity, which may and often does distinguish Persons of the same Character at

* *Telemach.* B. 20.

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different Times and upon different Occasions; He describes Avarice and Ambition according to their general Symptoms, Marks and Operations; not the particular Conduct and Character of him who is avaricious and proud. His Manners are often poetically just and somewhat too uniform for the History of Fact and human Nature. The same Regularity cannot be expected in the Moral as in the Natural World.

After what is here objected to *Tacitus* as being too *General*, it may be wondered how we can accuse him of being too *Particular*. But the Particularity censured is not that just Relation of the Particulars of any Action, which commonly distinguish it from any other Action of the same Kind; but the tagging some little Circumstance to the Tail of a general Description, which is intended by the Author to aggravate the Horror or aggrandize the Pomp of it, which really does but disgrace it.

Thus to express the Greatness of the Victory gained over, and the Slaughter made of the *Britains* under *Boadicea* by the *Romans* under *Suetonius*: “ Such, we are told, was the Fury of the Soldiers, that they spared not even
“ the Lives of Women; nay, the very Beasts
“ escaped

“ escaped not ; they were pierced with Darts,
 “ and served to swell the mighty Heaps of the
 “ Dead^b.”

Thus after a general Description of the Mi-
 sery occasioned by the Fall of the Amphitheatre
 at *Fidenæ*^c, the Annalist adds, “ that there
 “ was a frequent Contention about the Pro-
 “ perty of the Dead, where the Features were
 “ distorted by Death or Bruises, or where Pa-
 “ rity of Age, or Resemblance of Person had
 “ confounded the Slain, and led into Mistakes
 “ their several Claimers.”

I am not ignorant of the Regard paid by the
 Heathen to their Dead, and the Care they had
 of their Funerals, yet I cannot but think this
 too low a Circumstance, and detracting from
 that general Horror, Consternation and Pity
 that strikes us upon hearing of fifty-thousand
 Souls at once, maimed or slain.

How simple and unaffected is the scripture
 Account of *Sampson*'s pulling down the House
 or Temple of *Dagon* upon himself and the
Philistines? And *Samson* said, “ Let me die
 “ with the *Philistines*? and he bowed himself
 “ with all his Might, and the House fell upon
 “ the Lords and upon all the People that were
 “ therein: So the Dead which he slew at his

^b Ann. 14. 37.

^c *Ibid.* 4. 62.

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“ Death, were more than they which he flew
 “ in his Life^d.” And how astonishing is the
 imagined Misery as described by *Milton* !

Man. ————— O what Noise !
Mercy of Heaven, what hideous Noise was that,
Horribly loud, unlike the former Shout !

Chor. Noise call you it, or universal Groan,
As if the whole Inhabitation perish'd?
Blood, Death, and deathful Deeds are in that
Noise,
Ruin, Destruction at the utmost Point.
 Saml. Agonist.

It is said indeed, “ That *Samson*’s Brethren
 “ and all the House of his Father came down
 “ and brought him up and buried him be-
 “ tween *Zorab* and *Eshbaol* in the burying
 “ Place of *Manoah* his Father.” But here it
 ought to be observed, that *Samson* was the He-
 ro of the Action, and a Prince of his People,
 and as the sacred Writer with the utmost Pro-
 priety here adds, “ had judged *Israel* twenty
 “ Years.”

After the general Defeat given the *Germans*
 by *Germanicus*, some of the Enemy are descri-

^d *Judg.* 16. 30.

bed as hiding themselves in the Tops of Trees, who were shot by the Archers in Sport, or crushed by the Fall of the Trees^e.

These I think are too trifling Circumstances, and diminish rather than augment the Glory of this great Victory ; (*magna ea Victoria*.)

How much more elegant and raised is the sacred Account of the Battle in the Wood of *Ephraim* ; where instead of any boyish Particulars, it is only said, “ That the Wood devoured more People that Day than the Sword “ devoured^f.” *Joab*’s thrusting *Abisalom* thro’ the Heart with three Darts, while he was yet alive in the Oak, is much different from the Particularity censured in *Tacitus*. Here it was the General on one Side, the Cause and chief Support of the War, and by whose Death it was ended, and of whom it was therefore proper to give an Account.

Again, upon the Desolation made by an uncommon Inundation of the *Tiber*, I think it is a lessening, though it might be a true Circumstance, “ That very many were caught in “ their Beds and in their Shops by it^g.” And I dare say, few Writers who had been Eye-witnesses to the general Desolation made by such

^e Ann. 2. 17.

^f 2 Sam. 18. 8.

^g Hist. 1. 86.

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an uncommon Calimity would have described it by such Circumstances.

Our Author's Conduct in this Respect reminds me of a Paragraph that lately appear'd in one of the Foreign Journals, describing the Violence of a Hurricane ; " which, (if I re-
" member the Words aright) shatter'd Moun-
" tains, tore up Oaks by the Roots, and car-
" ried them through the Air to a great Dis-
" tance, dismantled Churches, laid Villages
" desolate, and overturn'd a Haystack."

As the Passions in our Author, it has been before observ'd, are somewhat extravagant, and his Characters extraordinary; so there is besides an affected Perverseness and studied Inconsistency in them. A common Course or regular Process in the moral or natural World, is too low a Subject for *Tacitus*: His Design is to astonish; and therefore his Characters must have something of the Miraculous in them, as well as his Descriptions.

With great Uprightness and popular Favour *Vitellius* ruled *Africk* as Proconsul: *Vespasian* under the same Character govern'd with Ignominy and public Hate. From hence our Allies, says *Tacitus*, made their Conjectures (as indeed every Body else would) concerning the
Reign

Reign of each : *Sed Experimentum contra fuit* ^h.

There is still a greater Inconsistency in *Tacitus's* Character of *Vespasian*. *Africa* declared against him from the Experience they had had of his ill Conduct. Yet when he ruled in *Britain*, it should seem, he behaved differently ; for they declared for him against *Vitellius* : *inclitus erga Vespasianum favor apud Britannos* ⁱ.

If *Suetonius* may be believ'd, *Vespasian's* Conduct was more uniform : “ Obtaining the Province of *Africa*, he govern'd with great Integrity, and was treated with extraordinary Veneration and Honour ^k.”

Otho was in a private Station an unbridled Voluptuary, but when in Authority observant of Gravity and just Restraints, and a hardy General : He died to Fame, who had lived a Debauchee ; died like a Martyr, who had liv'd a Pathick ^l.

What a Contrariety have we in the Conduct and Character of *Titus Vinius*, first accused of being guilty of Adultery in the very Quarters sacred to the *Roman Eagles* with the General's Wife, and thrown into Irons for it ; then dis-

Hist. 2. 27.

ⁱ *Ibid.* 3. 44.

^k *Vespas.* c. 4.

^l Ann. 13. 46.

charg'd, not from the Conviction of his Innocence, but by the Change of the Times; and passing through a Succession of publick Employments with a Character free from Reproach? He commands a Legion, and acquits himself with Applause. After this he is charged with stealing a golden Goblet at *Claudius's* Table. Yet this same *Vinius* rules the Province of *Narbon Gaul* as Proconsul, with Justice unbiass'd and eminent Integrity ^m.

Thus again "*Cornelius Fuscus* of noble Race in the Bloom of Youth, had laid aside the Rank of Senator from a Love of Ease and Solitude ⁿ." Who would not expect from this Beginning a second *Atticus*? But in the same Chapter he is represented as joining the Party of *Vespasian* (which must tend to rend the Commonwealth into Faction and Discord) as adding to the Flames of War the most furious Fuel, and delighting not so much in the Rewards of Perils, as in Perils themselves; and to Acquirements long since attain'd and safely possess'd, preferring new Pursuits doubtful and dangerous.

The Reader will judge of the Propriety and Consistency of such a Conduct, by comparing

^m Hist. 1. 48.

ⁿ *Ibid.* 2. 86.

it with that of the Earl of *Newcastle* as drawn by the masterly Pen of Lord *Clarendon*.

Grotius saw the Inconsistency of this Character of *Corn. Fuscus*, and cries out, *Non sane quieti hic homo ingenij*: And so attempts to reconcile our Author by an arbitrary Alteration of the Text: Whereas *Tacitus* expected Admiration here, and not Correction.

Mitbridates is now represented with a Countenance and Dress suited to his miserable Circumstances, throwing himself at the Feet of *Eunones* °: But presently after insolent and haughty even in the Presence of the Imperial Majesty of *Rome*; and when in the *Forum* and encompassed with Guards, with a Countenance perfectly undaunted.

Many of *Tacitus's* Women are Heroes, and his Heroes, Women. *Agrippina* is represented as sacrificing to masculine Ambition all the Passions of her Sex °: as urging, “it was below her Spirit to sink in Time of Danger:” While the General and the Husband *Germanicus*, is represented with Tenderneſs and many Tears prevailing with her to depart ¶. All her Rage, Resentment and masculine Fury upon the Death of her Husband are unbecoming

° Ann. 12. 18.

¶ Ibid. 6. 25.

¶ Ibid. 1. 40.

her Circumstances; we rather condemn her Passions than pity her Sorrows.

Piso's Wife *Placina* is not restrain'd by the Decencies of her Sex; but frequents the Exercises of the Cavalry and the Decursions of the Cohorts[†]. *Triaria*, Wife of *L. Vitellius* is *ultra fœminam ferox*[‡], *Verulana Gracilia* follows *Sabinus* seizing upon the Capitol in favour of his Brother *Vespasian* against *Vitellius*, *neque liberos neque propinquos, sed bellum secula*[‡].

Tacitus's Slaves act with the spirited Ambition of Kings: His Kings with the mean and fordid Spirit of Slaves. Criminals and Malefactors fight like Heroes; and his Heroes tremble like Criminals. Guilt assumes the Confidence of conscious Virtue, and Captives behave with the Insolence of Conquerors.

The Woman and the Captive, *Arminius's* Wife is represented without Tears or Submission[¶]? *Boadicea* is resolv'd to conquer or die: Let the Men live and be Slaves[¶]. And in another Place you have a Ligurian Woman superior to the Rack, and even the Agonies of Death.

Tacitus's Whores are least eminent in their own Profession. A Bawd attempts to starve

[†] Ann. 2. 55.

[‡] Hist. 2. 69.

[‡] Ibid. 3. 69.

[¶] Ann. 1. 57.

[¶] Ibid. 14. 35.

the Roman Empire *. *Epicbaris*, a Slave and Whore (who till then had never shewn any Regard to ought that was worthy or honourable) undergoes the Fury of Stripes, of Fire and Tortures to protect such, to whom she had no Tye of Kindred or Friendship, nay, such as she scarce knew: While *Lucan*, *Senecio* and *Quinctianus*, Men, Freeman, Roman Knights and Senators, betray'd without Exception every the dearest Pledges they had in Blood and Friendship †.

While his Women are thus represented above the Frailties and Tenderneſs of their Sex, his most renowned Generals with their Armies, vanquish'd and Victors, nay his Emperors are sensible of the most timorous Passions, and very lavish of their Tears upon most Occasions.

It would be tedious to enlarge upon this Weeping Subject. The Armies are again and again represented in Tears: The chief Officers importune their General *Cæcina* with many Tears: *Tiberius* is represented *crebris cum lacrymis*: *Valens* and *L. Vitellius* with the Emperor his Brother are all Weepers. *Corbulo* himself fears and is appall'd at the receiving an Order tho' from the mean spirited *Claudius*. *Otho* fears and trembles: *Ostorius* the Roman Gene-

* *Crispinilla* Hist. 2. 73.

† Ann. 15. 49. 55.
ral,

ral, tho' superior in Number of Forces to *Caractacus* and his Troops — yet is amaz'd and affrighted at their Approach ^z.

Nay the infamous *Messalina*, Adulteress and Murderer, is represented weeping for the Sufferer in the very Act of Murdering him. Upon her Marriage with *Silius*, the Prince's Family is seiz'd with Dread and Horror: The Emperor himself is so confounded and dispirited, that he asks, "Whether he were yet Emperor?" And after she is deserted, and pitied by no Soul living, yet still the Prince trembles.

When *Agrippina* escapes the Wreck intended for her by her Son, *Nero* becomes mortally struck with Agony and Dismay, *jam jamque affore obtestans* ^b. *Xiphilin* relates what seems more like the Truth, that *Nero* was so transported with Anger, when he receiv'd the News, that he order'd him that brought it to be put to Death.

As to the Profusion of Tears, which I may say overflow in *Tacitus*, I cannot think it a natural Description or proper Expression of the Manners of Men in this Period of civil History. Of old indeed when mere Nature prevailed in the Breasts of the first rude Inhabi-

^z Hist. 3. 31 — 2. 23. Ann. 11. 20, &c.

^a *Ibid.* 28. 31.

^b *Ibid.* 14. 7.

tants of the Globe, we find the Passions bold, urgent and undisguised; and it was no Discredit to the Heroes of Antiquity to say of them

—— απ' οφρυσι δακρυα λειβον. *Hom.*

But more artificial Manners seem to have been in Fashion in the Times which our Author describes.

As the Passions are carried to an Excess, and the Change of them is somewhat unnatural; so I think this Change is sometimes too sudden. Men are represented this Moment all in an Uproar and Sedition; the next the same Men dragging the Seditious to Execution; now striking Terror, and immediately trembling under the Awe of those they before terrified, this Moment outrageously insulting all Authority; the next patiently submitting to the Punishment inflicted by it. The same Troops are above begging Peace, even when they had dropped all Efforts of War, who immediately after tamely present their Persons and Faces to all Indignities from the Conquerors: Now Men are extravagant in their Joy, then all melted into Tears. The same Armies one Day join in Battle against each other with implacable Rage, whom you presently after find uniting in Tears of Joy, detesting the Lot of civil Arms, and dressing each others Wounds. They exclaim against
the

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the Butchery and Parricide attending these unnatural Wars; and yet with the same Eagerness instantly proceed to the Commission of these Enormities*.

Thus *Tacitus* is perpetually endeavouring to affect his Reader with Indignation, Pity or Surprise; but then his Study to affect you appears so plain, that it defeats his Design. His Aim is to make himself the most conspicuous Personage in the Story; and so far he gains his Aim that you never lose Sight of him; but then it fares with him, as with an affected Beauty, who, not content with the Charms which Nature has given her, calls in the Help of Art to catch all Eyes, and looses Admirers by too apparent a Passion to gain them.

To this Vanity of our Author to display himself and amaze his Reader, I ascribe his Fondness for the Miraculous, his mixing natural with civil History, his Credulity and Falsehood. As his Descriptions are extraordinary, and his Passions extravagant; so his Lies are egregious ones, and his Prodigies most prodigious.

To raise Pity for *Germanicus*, the Annalist recounts some Circumstances attending his Death, to make us believe he was poisoned, or

* Ann. 1. 44. Hist. 2. 45. *Ibid.* 3. 23, &c.

rather

rather bewitched. “ Fragments of human Bodies, the Spoils of the Grave are found upon the Walls and Floors with Charms and Incantations, and the Name of *Germanicus* graved on Sheets of Lead — Carcasses half burnt besmeared with Gore and other Witch-crafts, by which the Souls of Men are doom’d to the infernal Gods^d.”

What is all this, but meer tragical Romance? *persuafiones è vulgo & ideo vanæ*, as *Lipsius* freely confesses.

In natural Things, if there comes across our Author any Appearance that borders upon the Wonderful, you are sure to be entertained with it; and not one superstitious Whimsy, or fabulous Circumstance attending it, will be omitted.

The Sun-rising, ’tis true, is no Miracle; but by Way of Pomp, and through the Vanity of Eastern Manners, you have the third Legion saluting it in the Heat of Action. This Legion, it seems, had been quartered in *Syria*; but I think this no sufficient Reason for their adopting the *Syrian* Manners. In the Battle between the *Roman* Army under *Macrinus* and the *Parthians* under *Artabanus*, the Barbarians are represented by *Herodian*^e, as worshipping the Sun with the usual Ceremonies of

^d Ann. 2. 69.

^e Lib. 4.

those Countries ; but not one Word of the *Roman* Army or any Part of it paying this Homage or any Kind of Respect to it.

The Manner of gathering Bitumen or Pitch is very extraordinary, as related by our Historian from ancient Writers ^f. The Fire among the *Inbones* is one of the most uncommon that I have met with. It not only arises from no common Cause, being an Eruption from the Bowels of the Earth, but it is also not to be extinguish'd in a common Way : “ By throwing of
“ Stones, by Clubs and Blows as in an En-
“ counter with fierce and savage Beasts, says
“ our poetical Exaggerator, it is quite re-
“ puls'd ^g.”

As to our Author's Monsters half Man and half Beast ; they might of old be the Mormos of Ignorance and Idolatry ; or in latter Times may have made Part of the Entertainment in the Scenical Revels of a gay Court ; but ought never to claim a Place in a civiliz'd Historian as real or natural Beings, and the Objects of historic Faith.

The Story of the *Phenix* ^h (tho' the *French* Critick *Rapin* calls this a just Digression) is quite Romantic ; at least impertinent in the *Roman* Story, or indeed in any Story, but the

^f Hist. 5. 6.

^g Ann. 13. 58.

^h *Ibid.* 6. 28.

History of *vulgar Errors*: Yet *Tacitus* introduces the Relation with *a cognitu non absurda*: tho' he acknowledges at the Conclusion of this Excursion, *hæc incerta & fabulis aucta*: *Bochart* and *Pliny* think the whole Story of the Phenix to be justly suspected. But allowing it more than an imaginary Existence, this was not the Time of it's Appearance. It is a fabulous Affair, says our Author's Defenders, which made him less careful in his Calculation. The Truth is, it was a Wonder, seen sometime or other, or at least reported to be seen, and recorded by Antiquity, and therefore must have a Place in our Author, who is particularly careful in the Relation of it.

Xiphilin just mentions this Phenomenon, but in such a way as shews the Absurdity or Impropriety of giving it a Place in his Story. The same Year, says "he, *if the Affairs of Egypt* " *have any Connexion with those of Rome,* " there appear'd a Phenix in those Parts, which " *seemed to presage the Death of Tiberius,* " *who fell very sick the Year after.—ⁱ*"

As for our Author's Stories of the Cypress-Tree: — of the *Egyptian God Serapis*: — of the *Paphian Venus*: — of the Vision that ap-

ⁱ *Xiphilin* by *Manning*, Vol. i. p. 259.

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pear'd to *Curtius Rufus* ^k : — believe them who will for me. The Relation of *Hercules's* Hunting is one of the grossest Lies that ever disgrac'd a History : Yet it is told by *Tacitus* as a most serious Truth ^l.

Vespasian's Miracles, his healing the Lame, and restoring Sight to the Blind, *Tacitus* plainly believes, and would have others do so too ^m : As I suppose he would have us give the same Credit to his Account of the *Jews* ; which is such a Heap of absurd, inconsistent, notorious Falsehood, that all that his Defenders can say in his Favour, is, “ That he “ is not the worst of Liars, but that others “ in their Deliriums have raved greater Lies “ than he.” *Ne tantopere noster culpetur tanquam mendaciorum plenissimus, Scriptor. Et sane Strabo, Plutarchus, Democritus apud quidam multo majora Deliria delirarunt* ⁿ.

Yet this is the Writer noted for *Veracity* and *Candour*°; and this the Jewish Account (Infidelity blush!) swallowed by the squeamish Unbeliever, and quoted by him to confront the Authority of sacred Writ!

Upon a Review of these Observations on *Tacitus's* Description, the Reader will judge,

^k Hist. 2. 78. 3. 4. 83. Ann. 11. 21. ^l *Ibid.* 12, 13.

^m Hist. 4. 81. ⁿ *Lips.* in Fac. Hist. L. 5. init.

• Philosophical Essays, p. 192.

whether

whether here is not something composed *Miraculi Causâ*, and whether our Author acts like one, “ who holds it unworthy the Gravity of his Subject to collect fabulous Stories, “ and to abuse with Fictions the Minds of his “ Readers^p.”

^p Hist. 2. 50.



C H A P. III.

BUT notwithstanding the Pompousness of his Description, and the Miraculous in his Relations, the Excess in his Passions, and the Extravagancy of his Characters, I make no Scruple to assert, that there is a great Deal of Meanness in the Writings of *Tacitus*; tho' I confess his Subject is sometimes in the Fault.

For Want of grander Scenes, he often fills up his Annal with low and trivial Circumstances unbecoming the Majesty of History and the Dignity of the *Roman* People, even in their Decline.

The Impudence of a Slave, or the Diffentions of a Play-house are low Insurrections, if they may deserve that Name, and attended with no Circumstances worth remembring or relating, compared with the Seditions, or rather the just Resentment of the old *Romans*. It was then a Convulsion of the Republick; and such Dignity had those Commotions that we scarce know on which Side stood the Commonwealth.

The Senate are a Tribe of formal Knaves, and dastardly Traitors, ready to compliment their

their Prince with the Lives of every worthy Patriot (if one ventured to breath a free Thought) and to sanctify every infamous Act, so it might but prolong to them the Lives of Slaves and Sycophants. They are a low, dispirited Body of Men, or scarce a Body of Men. When you hear of the Senate met, you can scarce conceive of them with the Respect due to a Grand Jury, or a Bench of Justices. You can scarce think of a Pretor or a *Roman* Knight under a higher Character than that of a Country 'Squire or the Mayor of a Corporation.

Here you have a *Porcius Cato*, with others of the same high Rank, turning Informers; there three other *Roman* Senators lurking in a Garret, and listening through a Chink to betray an honest Man: Here the Nobles of *Rome* bearing with Patience the Insults of *Sejanus's* Porters; there *Trio* and *Regulus* the Consuls falling out and squabbling like two Parish Officers. And indeed the Body of the Senate, had the Motion of *Togonius Gallus*^a been com-

^a The Motion was, that the Prince should choose a Body of Senators, of whom Twenty drawn by Lot under Arms should wait upon him and defend his Person as often as he entered the Senate. *Ann.* 6. 2.

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plied with by the Emperor, had made a Figure little better than the *Pretorian Guards*, or so many Footmen in the Lobby of the House.

Sometimes, 'tis true, out of an affected Imitation of ancient Manners, we are told of a *Senatus consultum prisca severitate compositum*; But can we forget that 'tis the same Senate that are represented in the same Author *trepidi Patres*, — and *contremuerant Patres*?

When they gripe their Fists at *Seriolanus Vocula*, till he is obliged to quit the House, we can scarce help considering them under any other Character than that of a Set of Bullies, rather than an august Body of *Roman Senators*. Laws passed and Authority exerted without Passion or personal Menaces had better become their Name and Dignity.

Corbulo, the renowned General *Corbulo* complaining of the Badness of the Roads, occasioned by the Negligence of the Overseers, makes no great Figure in a *Roman Senate*, where I suppose the Complaint was lodged^r. If such Transactions and such Motions are worth recording, a modern History of *England* might be soon compiled.

^r Ann. 3. 31.

Even *Tiberius* with all his profound Wisdom complaining of the Licentiousness of the Players, seems to act much below his Character. The Wantonness of a Farce, or the Ill-manners of Punch or Harlequin would not, I suppose, found well from a *British* Throne, much less from the Imperial Majesty of *Rome*.

His now chiding this Senator, now that, then the whole Body ^f, appears not like a King, nor so great as a Tyrant, at least not a Tyrant of *Rome*.

His going in a Hurry to the Chamber of *Plautius Silvanus* (who had kill'd his Wife) to examine the Circumstances with his own Eyes, gives us a very low Idea of a *Roman* Emperor thus discharging the Office of a Coroner, or a petty Constable.

Thus *Germanicus* in Imitation of *Papirius Cursor* in *Livy*, must visit the wounded Soldiers. *Papirius* is represented very naturally as putting his Head into their Tents, asking them how they do, and giving his Officers a particular Charge of their Cure. *Tacitus* must improve upon this; and so *Germanicus* is represented *Vulnera intuens*; which I think a

^f Ann. 6. 23.

boyish Circumstance, and rather lessening the Character of the General †.

Tiberius is an egregious Speaker: Never Prince, says the learned Critick *Rapin*, spoke with more Dignity. Now I cannot help thinking, that, tho' he speaks very finely, and very few that have wore a Crown have said greater or wiser Things, he speaks too often and too long at a Time. He wants the Imperial Brevity. There is more Dignity, State, and of the Royal Character preserved in a few Words of *Shakespear's Julius Cæsar*, than by the most laboured Speeches of *Tiberius*. His Edicts are as common as King *James's* Proclamations, and often upon as trifling Occasions, *Populumque Edicto monuit: — utque premeret Vulgi Sermones monuit Edicto*: Thus, if I remember right, King *James* published a Proclamation to forbid the People talking News, *inreputque per Edictum plebem. — Tum Cæsar populum edicto increpuit*, — are Phrases that frequently occur in *Tacitus*.

In his Speeches and Edicts *Tiberius* has more the Air of a Philosopher than a Legislator; he reasons not only too often, but too minutely and exactly for an Emperor: He

† Ann. I. 71.

moralizes and distinguishes more like a Pedant than a Prince : In any History I have casually perus'd, I never read so much speculative Wisdom, abstracted and refined Reasoning in the Speeches of Kings as in those of our Author. Their Actions and Laws generally speak for them. If a Prince according to *Tacitus* or *Tiberius*, (to whom *Tacitus* is the Prompter) should not upon trifling Commotions leave his Capitol, when a Life and Motion is derived to the Whole; neither should he, I think, descend as it were from his Throne, and upon every trivial Occasion descant, and moralize, and distinguish, and instruct like a Pedagogue. *Majus aliquod & excelsius a Principe postulatur.* Royalty appears greatest in Acting great Things: In enacting, not prating of, wholesome Laws and wise Regulations : In commanding rather than informing his Subject, and by his Example rather than his Tongue reforming the Manners of a Nation.

Again *Claudius*, as well as *Tiberius*, *populi Licentiam severis Edictis increpuit.* This last Word, which occurs so often I cannot think very Imperial, or becoming Majesty. Edicts and Laws, upon whatever provoking Circumstances fram'd and promulg'd, should seem to

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convey no Passion ; but be suppos'd the Product of deliberate Reason and just Policy.

Most of *Tacitus's* Actors in the Provinces, whether introduced as Enemies or Allies to the Roman State, as *Tacfarinas*, *Mithridates*, *Gotarzes*, *Zorcines* King of the *Soracians* ; *Izates* Leader of the *Adiabeniens*, the *Clitæ* Boors of *Cilicia* with their Leader *Tbrofobor*, the *Ligians*, *Hermundurians*, and *Jaxigians*, are very despicable, and had probably never made so considerable a Figure, had not our Annalist wanted Materials. Many of them are meer Highlanders or *Mountain-Rats* as the *Mogul* calls an ill Inmate " he has got. Several of the People and Nations mentioned are very much unknown and scarce heard of before in History ; or where they have been mention'd, 'twas for their Insignificancy : As the *Hypæpeni* remind us of the

——— *Parvis habitabat Hypæpis*

of *Ovid*. *Tacitus* seems sensible of the Meanness and Inconsiderableness of many of them, and so endeavours to raise their Credit, and magnify the Importance of his own Relations,

" *Seva-Gi*. See *Fryar's Travels*, p. 171.

by telling us what we should not possibly have otherwise ever known : *Musulorum—valida ea Gens. Cinthios haud spernendum Nomen, &c* ^x.

All the foreign War in the *East*, which takes up so considerable a Part of his Annals, and is related with so much Particularity and Pomp as if the Fate of the World had been depending upon it: — the mighty Name of *Corbulo* : — the mighty *Parthian* Empire, the Glory of the *Arfacidæ*, is all false Glitter: Nothing is done befitting the mighty Names of the General and of the Empire: You have scarce a Battle fought, or Enterprize undertaken worthy the Recording or Perusing. You have little else but Tumults. Advances, Retreats, Kings recall'd, Kings banished, Kings slain, and all in such Confusion and Hurry, that I believe few Readers peruse this Part of his Works with any Manner of Satisfaction or Pleasure. Besides you have such artificial and infamous Characters on both Sides, such insignificant Motives of Action, such selfish Ends, such low ambitious Views, as leave you unconcern'd in the Dispute and quite indifferent who is the Victor, and who the Vanquish'd.

^x Ann. 3. 38, &c.

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The Fame of his most renowned Generals is often built on false Glory, artful Measures, and treacherous Views.

In the Campaigns which he gives us the History of, we have several little Circumstances related (as *Corbulo's* sending a Convoy or Guard to the *Hycanian* Ambassador,) almost too trifling for a *Gazette*.

The same Littleness appears in the domestick Occurrences he recounts; many of which are below the Dignity, and unworthy the Notice of any Author, who professes to write for the Instruction of the present and future Ages.

What does it concern Posterity, when such a Vestal Virgin died: When such a Pretor was knock'd on the Head by a Boor: — When and where *Poppæa* was brought to Bed: — or, When such a Tribune stabb'd his Whore?

The Ceremonies observ'd in laying the Foundations of the Temple burnt down in the Skirmish between the Party of *Vitellius* and the Followers of *Sabinas*, Brother to *Vespasian*, are not the proper Subject of History. Such formal Affairs at full Length, as Coronations, funeral Processions (in which our Author is happy enough, having no doubt seen Royal Obsequies and the Forms of a Court) and Dedications

dications of Temples, would make a more proper Appearance in the Work of an Antiquarian.

Nor does this Observation affect the Credit of the sacred History, which was not intended as a Work of Genius compiled by the Rules of human Art. The Dedication of the Temple by *Solomon* was like the Beginning of a new *Æra* in the *Jewish* State, and had a close Connection with their future Fortunes. The God of Heaven was the God of it; and to Him, as their Resident, were all their Prayers in different Fortunes to be directed. To Him were they to appeal by Oath in their Complaints against each other, as the Vindicator of Innocence and the Avenger of Falsehood and Wrong. The Temple was properly and truly their Pledge of Empire; and a just Regard to its Service, and the God of it, was the Charter by which they held their Liberty and Happiness: — was to them in the Room of civil Virtues and military Prowess: — made them happy at Home and victorious Abroad. The Dedication (and *Solomon's* Prayer upon the Occasion) was performed with the Dignity and Authority of a Legislator promulging the Laws of his new State: And the Prayer in particular
is

is filled with juster Notions of Providence, as the Source of National Happiness and Calamity, than are to be found in all the Writings of *Greece and Rome*.

To return to our Author. I cannot think it of Moment to Posterity to know the Crimes of *one* Senator. What History would be sufficient to comprehend the Crimes of Particulars, unconnected with the Business of the State? Nor is it of more Importance to tell us that *one Man* was suspected of bribing for the Consulship, where 'tis notorious all were corrupt.

His best Characters make but a sorry Figure, as well as his worst, When I see those great Men (as our Author would represent them) so tamely submitting to the Tyrant's Orders, I have less Pity for their Fate, which they almost seem to have deserved by their waiting for it. Blood so profusely, so wantonly shed by a Wretch so infamous as *Nero*, gives us the lowest and meanest Opinion of the *Roman* Courage at this Period of their History. 'Tis something remarkable in our Author's Actors, that, as upon other Occasions they reflect like Sages, but act like Fools and Knaves, so here they talk big, but behave meanly; they shew
their

their Indignation, Contempt and Scorn of the Tyrant, yet all submit to his sanguinary Orders; and not a *Roman* Soul appears, that dares handle a Sword, but to his own Destruction.



C H A P. IV.

IT may perhaps be said, that the Meanness of the Subject, was the Occasion of the Meanness in the Writer; and that Dross in any Hands could never be transformed to Gold.

The Defence is in some Part true; and *Tacitus's* own Apology in some Measure just. But still it must be asserted, that there are Writers of almost or altogether as bad Times as those our Author has made the Subject of his Annals, who have more Dignity, tho' less Wit, and better answer the Character of Historians, tho' without half his Sagacity and Wisdom.

And there is besides one Quality in *Tacitus*, for which no sufficient Apology has been, or can be made; and which renders him perhaps the most disagreeable Writer that a Reader of any Humanity can peruse. 'Tis that perpetual Malignity and Ill-nature which disposes him upon all Occasions to censure, blacken and de-

Pleraque eorum quæ retuli, quæque referam, parva forsitan & levia memoratu videri non nescius sum: sed Nemo Annales nostros cum Scriptura eorum contenderit, qui veteres Populi Romani res composuere. Ann. 4. 32, 33.

fame,

fame, and to give the worst Meaning to Actions capable of a kinder Interpretation and a more candid Sense.

The very Vices of *Vitellius*, we are told, were esteemed Virtues; but Virtues themselves with *Tacitus* are Vices. Few Men's Actions, Words, nay Looks or Thoughts are free from his Censures and Suspicions; and with Eagerness he relates bold and infamous Scandals, even where he affects not to believe them. His best Characters have their Faults to discredit all their Virtues; and his worst have their Virtues to display other Men's Crimes. His distinguished Generals are but poorly described and with a Kind of malevolent sparing Applause; as speaking of *Germanicus*, he says, *Juveni civile Ingenium, mira Comitas*. Is this answerable to the Dignity of the high-born Prince, and the renowned General? If *Tacitus* allows a Man some Virtue upon Occasion, he will take Care to dash it with some greater Vice; and the weak or the wicked Part is generally an Over-balance in every Character he meddles with. If one Man's Character is approved, it is commonly at the Expence and the Contrast of anothers. If one Virtue is allowed a Man, it is frequently
with

with the Loss of all beside; or grant a Man's Life spotless, his Will appears against him to blacken him when dead. Suppose a Man eloquent.—He wants Morals; or the Infirmities of Age must be alledged to traduce his manly Fame; or the Reputation of his Eloquence when living, must be destroyed by the little Regard paid to his Writings when he is gone^z. The greatest Wonder in *Tacitus* is one good Character set off by its native Colours, without invidious Comparison or odious Contrast. He allows little Merit any where, except when it is to blacken a Greater. It may be frequently observed of our Author, that upon a dubious Point or Character, if he gives something to Praise and Candour on one Side, you will find the Wit and Malice more keen and poignant on the other. He will sometimes set out with an Air of Moderation and Charity, but it is only to give a freer Course, and to gain more Credit to the bold Scandals that are to follow. Upon these Occasions he seems to be acting in his true and natural Character; for he is nowhere more eloquent and witty than when he blackens: Viper-like, most lively when he darts his Venom.

^z Ann. 4. 52. 61, &c.

If he allows a Thing to be well done, the Right of doing it is disputed; or suppose the Right, it might have been done better or sooner; there is some Failure in the Execution, or the Consequence is bad, or the Motive wrong. Such is the Fruitfulness of our Author's Invention, that he can find Reasons to defend the worst Measures, or Arguments, to discredit the best: — To abate the Infamy of the Vanquished, in order to diminish the Glory of the Conquerors: — To lessen the Guilt of the greatest Criminals, in order to aggravate the Cruelty of their Punishment.

Tacitus is so extraordinary a Genius, that there is not a Measure taken, or an Argument used, which he cannot readily find Wit or Malice; and if not Reason, yet the Semblance of Reason to oppose to: And indeed there are few Actions of the most upright Men, which will stand the Test, if Wit and Malice are the Judges. These together are the most dangerous Enemies to common Honesty, and do most immerciful Execution. The Wit to an inadvertent Reader or Hearer recommends the Malice, conceals and makes it palatable, like Poison conveyed in a pleasant Vehicle.

It will, no Doubt, be said, in Defence of *Tacitus*, that upon Occasion he defends the Innocent from unjust Aspersions, as he does *Tiberius* in the Affair of *Drusus's* Death; and gives Warning to his Readers not to believe Reports and Rumours often falsely grounded, and raised from the Odium that commonly persecutes Princes and their Ministers.

Allow our Author this Truth; and a great Part of his Writings must be condemned, as made up of Falsehood. Men's Opinions, Reflections, Tears, ill-grounded Suspicions, malevolent Conjectures, and slanderous Reports, making a very large Share of his Works. Nay, Lampoons from unknown Hands, and Reports of Family Differences, are thought worthy remembering and recording by our *Roman* Annalist; and the Suspicions and Credulity of a Mob admitted in a Charge against their Governors.—What Pity is it, that a Writer, who knew so well what was good, should act no better!

It is said of *Cato*, that in his Chronicles or historical Memoirs of the *Roman* Wars, he did not mention any Commanders, but without any Names at all gave the naked Event of Things.

Things *. But our Author seems to regard Persons more than Things; it is not so much what is done, as the Manner of doing it; nor the Manner so much as the bad Manner of doing it, that engages his Pen. He acts more the Part of a Satyrift than an Historian; of an Accuser than a Judge; ever awake and intent to find Fault, with specious Arguments and Objections ready at Hand against every Measure or Character that presents itself. When he goes on from Character to Character, still suspecting, and still blackening, I think, of the *Benjamite*, who attended his distress'd Monarch, and as he proceeded still went on Cursing.

It would be almost endless, as it is needless, to quote all that might be produced to make good this Charge against *Tacitus*: Let a few Instances suffice.

Augustus's Conduct, in confining the Empire, it is supposed, might proceed from Fear or Envy. His adopting *Tiberius* might not be owing to any Regard he had for the Commonwealth; but that discovering his Arrogance and Cruelty, he might seek Glory to himself by a Comparison with so infamous a Successor^b. *Suetonius*

* *Nepot. Vit. Caton.*

^b *Ann. I. 10, 11.*

mentions such a Report, but is candid and careful in refuting it^c. And both these Insinuations are proved false and scandalous by *Strada*^d in his Prolusions, to which I refer the Reader.

Some Apology is indeed offered by *Tacitus* for *Augustus's* Conduct, but 'tis followed with all the Malice and Rancour imaginable; and his very domestick Affairs are ransacked, to expose him the more^e.

The Death of the two Brothers *L.* and *C. Cæsar*, are obliquely charged upon *Livia*; tho' *Suetonius*, *Velleius* and *Florus* give not, I think, the least Insinuation of this Kind.

In a very nice and critical Affair, all Men, says the Annalist, blamed *Germanicus*. *Tacitus* offers not the least Defence for his distressed and upright General; but inflames by his Wit, if he did not raise, the Objections against him^f.

As *Antonia*, the Mother of *Germanicus*, is not mentioned as attending her Son's Funeral, he takes this Silence of the Historians and Journalists for a positive Proof that she did not attend; and tho' he allows that she might be prevented by Sicknes, or her Soul vanquished

^c *Sueton. Tiber. 21.*

^d *L. 1. Proluf. 2. Histor.*

^e *Ann. 1. 10, 11.*

^f *Ibid. 1. 40.*

with Sorrow might not be able to bear the Representation of such a mighty Calamity: Yet he chuses rather to believe, that she was forced by *Tiberius* and *Livia*, who, affecting equal Affliction with her, would have it seem, that, by the Example of the Mother, the Grand-mother too and Uncle were detained^z.

There seems to be a Prejudice in *Tacitus* against almost every Thing that *Tiberius* does or says. The most laudable Actions of this Prince are diminished or explained away: His most candid Expressions perverted: His smallest Crimes aggravated; and even indifferent Things done by him, are interpreted in the worst Sense they can possibly bear; but the greatest Crimes which he punishes are softened, and the Odium thrown upon the Judge, not the Offender.

His continuing for a long Time the same Governours in the Provinces, is insinuated to proceed from a Principle of Envy; *ne plures fruerentur*^h: Tho' this Measure is perhaps as much to be applauded as any that this politic Prince ever pursued. *Strada*, and the Commentators upon *Tacitus*, have shewn this Con-

^z Ann. 3. 3.

^h *Ibid.* 2. 80.

duct of *Tiberius* to be both wise and merciful ; but our Author chuses rather to assign any Reason for it, than such a one as would do Honour to the Prince.

In the first Annal, among other Reflections upon *Augustus*, one is, for his having assumed divine Honours : *Nibil Deorum Honoribus relictum cum se templis & effigie Numinum coliveret*ⁱ. But when *Tiberius* refuses a Temple and Adoration, tho' no Prince could speak with more Greatness of Mind, Justice and good Sense than he does upon this Occasion, yet an invidious Turn is given to this commendable Action : " And by many it was ascribed, says " our Annalist, to a conscious Diffidence ; " by others, to a Degeneracy of Spirit." The Reasons assign'd why it must be this Degeneracy of Spirit, any one, who knows *Tacitus's* Manner, may swear to be his own. *Optimos quippe mortalium altissima capere : Sic Herculem & Liberum apud Græcos : Quirinum apud nos Deum numero additos. Melius Augustum qui speraverit — contemptu famæ contempti virtutes*^k. The Affectation of Antiquity and the Wit plainly father themselves.

ⁱ Ann. c. 10.

^k *Ibid.* 4. 40.

Tibe-

Tiberius's Silence upon Occasion, and which he intends as popular, is ascribed to his Pride. The Impunity of *Rubrius Fabatus*, a State-Criminal, is supposed owing to the Emperor's Forgetfulness rather than his Clemency¹.

Yet at other Times we are told of his long-lived Hatred, particularly to *Serenus*; which, I think, did not deserve to be mentioned; for *Tiberius* shews himself kind, or at least far less cruel than he might have been, had he been disposed to Vengeance^m.

The Cause of *Cocceius Nerva's* Death, assign'd by those, who knew his Thoughts was, according to our Author, his Fear and Indignation from a View of the publick Miseries; whence, without Doubt, considering *Nerva's* Character, new Odium must be derived upon the Tyrantⁿ.

The Annalist frequently pretends to know the Heart of *Tiberius*, and produces his Thoughts to set aside the natural and obvious Meaning of his Words. If he allows him one Virtue, it is at the Expence of all beside; and even this Virtue must be discredited by his

¹ Ann. 6. 13, 14.

^m *Ibid.* 4. 29, 30.

ⁿ *Ibid.* 6. 26.

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practising it so rarely, or in a Manner not popular.

When he paid a hundred thousand great Sesterces, to make good the Damages done by Fire. “ His Bounty, says our Author, was
“ the more grateful to the People, as he was
“ ever sparing in private Buildings: In Truth,
“ his public Works never exceeded two °.”

Hipbilin seems to do much more Justice to this Prince's Munificence. “ He repaired,
“ says he, all the ancient Edifices that were
“ fallen to Ruins (for he built nothing new but
“ the Augustal) and yet gave himself none of
“ the Honour; but set the Names of their
“ first Founders upon them. Though he was
“ very sparing in what related to private Ex-
“ pences, he employed a great deal of Mo-
“ ney for the Benefit of the Publick; for he
“ not only made a World of Repairs, but he
“ was likewise very liberal, as well towards
“ Communities, as particular Persons.”

Aquila's Adultery had not perhaps been mentioned, but to shew the Prince's obstinate Cruelty in her Sentence, *viz.* Banishment; Shocking Cruelty, venial Crime!

• Ann. 6. 45. P *Hiph. Manning's* Translat.
Vol. I. p. 214.

The Story of the Adulteress *Julia* is told in such a Manner, as to raise our Pity for her Misfortune rather than our Abhorrence of her Guilt. The Odium of her Crime is to be forgot, and buried in the presumed Cruelty of the injured Husband⁹. “ From the same Root, “ adds the Annalist, was derived his Cruelty “ to *Sempronius Gracchus*, who had debauch- “ ed her, and inflamed her Aversion to her “ Husband.” *Vell: Paterculus*, makes *Tiberius* merciful upon this Occasion: *Appius Claudius* & *Sempronius Gracchus*, — *quasi cujuslibet Uxore violata pœnas pependere; cum Cæsaris filiam & Neronis violassent Conjugem*^r.

Yet the Constancy of *Sempronius* in dying must be applauded, in order, no Doubt, to aggravate the Emperor's Cruelty who commanded his Execution.

Tiberius's Cruelty might indeed have been censured upon this Occasion by our Author, who scruples not to condemn *Augustus* for much less Severity on a similar Account. *Silanus* had been guilty of Adultery with his Grand-daughter; for which he is only forbid the Emperor's Presence, and excluded his Friendship, but now returns in Safety to *Rome*.

⁹ Ann. 1. 53.

^r *Paterc. L. 2. c. 100.*

Upon this Occasion our Politician remarks, that *Augustus* to a Fault common between Men and Women gave the Name of Religion violated and Treason ; and herein (in the Punishment I suppose) departed from the Clemency of the ancient *Romans*, and violated his own Laws^f. I shall not here stay to dispute the Truth of this Remark, or to compare the Punishment of Adultery as inflicted by the ancient Laws, and by *Augustus*; but would only have the Reader observe, what a softening Term he gives to this Crime. *Culpam inter viros ac faminas vulgatam*. Were we disposed to insinuate in Imitation of our Writer, might we not suspect that he was playing the Sycophant, and complimenting Court-Villainy?

But to return to *Tiberius* — It was probably to aggravate his Cruelty, that all he is made to charge *Agrippina* with is, *Adrogantiam Oris & contumacem Animum*. A false Plot, one would imagine, might easily have been forged, and Witnesses suborn'd. This Conduct of *Tiberius* seems not at all agreeable to the deep Policy every where ascribed to him, nor indeed to the Policy of any Tyrant ; which common-

^f Ann. 3. 24.

ly pretends false Plots, or Conspiracies, to justify sanguinary Executions. *Agrippina*, it seems, was a Favourite of the People. *Germanicus* had been a Favourite: Why then this unnecessary Provocation?

Suetonius writes what looks likest Truth, that the Emperor charged her with intending at one Time to take Sanctuary at *Augustus's* Statue; at another to fly to the Army.

The Infination of *Agrippina's* Death, seems equally false. "Feeling no Relaxation
" of *Tiberius's* Cruelty, Death grew her Choice,
" unless, adds the Annalist, *she was bereaved*
" of Nourishment, and her Disease feigned to
" be of her own Seeking."

If this Infination is true, the Cause of feigning her Death voluntary must be to avoid popular Odium; and the same Motive, one may reasonably suppose, should have induced *Tiberius*, not to have persecuted her without Cause, real or pretended.

But the Infination seems false. *Suetonius* asserts, "That when she resolved to starve her-
" self to Death, he ordered her Mouth to be
" wrested open, and Food to be cramm'd

[†] Ann. 6. 25.

" down

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“ down her Throat by Force ; but she per-
 “ sisting in her Resolution — pined away “.”

Tiberius, it must be own'd, was bad enough :
 Yet to do him Justice, it must be acknow-
 ledg'd, that upon most Occasions in the Begin-
 ning of his Reign, notwithstanding the Au-
 thor's and the Peoples general Reflections upon
 him, he shews himself a Prince of consum-
 mate Wisdom and Prudence, a Judge of Mo-
 rals and common Equity, a Despiser of Glory,
 and a Patron of Right ; and upon Occasions,
 merciful, and liberal with Discretion, and with-
 out Ostentation or Vanity “.

Tacitus indeed seems not consistent with
 himself, while he would aggravate the Odium
 against *Tiberius*. “ The Reflections of most
 “ People upon him, he says, were, that du-
 “ ring the several Years of his Abode at *Rhodes*,
 “ he exercis'd no other Occupation than that
 “ of *Meditating* future Vengeance, studying
 “ the Arts of Treachery, and practising secret
 “ and abominable Sensualities “.” If this is
 false, and *Tacitus* knew it to be such ; or, at
 least, if he did not know *Tiberius's* Thoughts

“ *Sueton. Tiber. 55.* “ He exerted the princely Power by
 Degrees ; and tho' it was with great Variety, yet it was gene-
 rally for the publick Good. *Sueton. Tiber. 33.* “ *Ann. i. 4.*

to be thus employed, why is this Scandal admitted? If he gives it for true, I ask, how is it consistent with the Character he gives of this Prince in the Conclusion of the Sixth Annal? *Egregium fama vitæ quoad privatus, vel in Imperiis sub Augusto.* Yet the Reflections of the People which we here censure, are suppos'd made before an Experience had of *Tiberius's* Capacity or Qualifications, and while *Augustus* was in Being. Nay, *Tiberius*, when Emperor, is represented crafty in feigning Virtues while *Germanicus* and *Drusus* survived; and secret in his Lusts, while he lov'd or fear'd *Sejanus*; nay, if we may believe *Tacitus*, *Tiberius* was an excellent Prince till the Death of *Drusus* : And *Sejanus* it seems, while he was laying the Foundations of his Power, was obliged to recommend himself by good Counsels; which, we may therefore imagine, were the only, or the best Way he had to insinuate himself into the Emperor's Favour.

There was however Room for Slander where *Tiberius* was the Subject; — but have better Men, any better Usage from this Writer's Pen?

The publick Speeches of *Nero*, in which he made so many Professions of Clemency, are

ascribed to the Composer *Seneca* : Either to shew what worthy Counsels he gave, or in *Ostentation of his Wit* ^a.

Now would not a candid Writer, and one acquainted with the great Abilities of *Seneca*, have hoped the best, and been content with supposing, that the Tutor, seeing the bloody Disposition of his Pupil, took this Method to imbue his Heart with tender Impressions, and to make him ambitious of the Praise due to a merciful Prince ?

Such seemed to have been the Sentiments of the Senate of *Rome* upon Occasion of one of the Speeches, I suppose, here alluded to ;
 “ which made, saith *Xiphilin*, so strong an
 “ Impression upon their Minds, that it was
 “ ordered to be engraved upon a Pillar of Sil-
 “ ver, and read every Year upon the Day
 “ when the Consuls enter upon their Office :
 “ ’Twas the Model of a wise and just Ad-
 “ ministration, which they had a Mind should
 “ be held continually before the Eyes of the
 “ Prince ^a.”

After *Nero* had procured his Mother’s Assassination, he acquaints the Senate with it, and at the same Time gives in a Catalogue of her

^a Ann. 13. c. 11. ^a *Xiphil.* by *Manning*, Vol. I. p 331.
 Crimes,

Crimes, in order to excuse the Parricide. " On
 " this Occasion, says the Annalist, it was not
 " upon *Nero* that the popular Censure fell
 " (for *Nero's* brutal Barbarity surpassed all
 " Censure or Complaint) but *Seneca adverso*
 " *rumore erat* for confessing the Deed ^b." Whereas, had the Fact been denied or dissembled, I dare say our Author would have set all *Rome* a laughing at the Impudence of those who could deny so notorious a Fact, and which was known to all the World. It was, no Doubt, the Notoriety of the Parricide that occasioned the Charge of the Plot brought against *Agrippina*; the Reality of which 'tis likely would sooner be believed, than that she was slain, the Emperor's Mother, without his Orders, and yet with Impunity to her Murderers.

Fabius Rusticus is quoted by *Tacitus*, as speaking in Praise of *Seneca*; but the Annalist would willingly detract from the Authority and Credit of this Writer, as being one who manifests a constant Zeal to extoll *Seneca*, by whose Friendship his own Fortune flourished ^b.

A Friend, it seems, is not to be believed, when speaking in Vindication or Praise of his Friend; but Scandal through any Channel is

^b Ann. 14. 11.

^c *Ibid.* 13. 20.

admitted

admitted without Contradiction ; and *Piso's* Friends averring “ their having seen him with
 “ a Bundle of Letters of *Tiberius* and his
 “ cruel Orders towards *Germanicus* ; — and
 “ that neither did *Piso* die by his own Hands,
 “ but by those of an express and private Exe-
 “ cutioner^c; — is left to be swallowed by
 the Reader at Discretion.

The infamous Slanders thrown upon *Seneca* by the infamous *Suilius*, are at large displayed, as if with Design to blast the Fame of this great Philosopher and upright Minister; and I think any one acquainted with *Tacitus's* Manner may easily perceive his own witty Malice in the Invektive here ascribed to *Suilius*. Nay, *Tacitus* seems to plead the Cause of this Wretch, notwithstanding his confessed Infamy, and says, “ he was not yet so low as his Enemies wished him^d.”

The Objections against *Seneca* upon other Occasions, are scurrilous and malicious; not manly, rational, or matter of Fact ; as perhaps no rational Objections could be raised against him. Yet as if all this was not enough, we have *Seneca* brought in after all as personating

^c Ann. 3. 16.

^d *Ibid* 13. 42.

his Enemies, and turning Satyrift against himself^c.

I have added at the Bottom of the Page the honest Remark of *Lipfius*^f upon Occafion of the Calumnies rais'd againft *Seneca*; and leave it to the Reader to judge, whether his Charge againft *Dio*, be not in part juftly due to our Annalift, whom the Commentator would perfuade us was a Friend to *Seneca*; but *Lipfius*, notwithstanding his great Learning, and particular Labours upon this Writer, was much a Stranger to his true Character.

Seneca's Misfortune was, that he was a Minifter of State; and therefore Knave by Profef-
fion; and *Tacitus* with the reft of the World is

^c Ann. 14. 52, 3.

^f — Omnes res relietas habet [*Dio*] præut culpet virum inculpatum. Ita Adulterium illi objicit cum *Agrippinâ*: Pul-
larium eum fuiſſe ait, idemque vitium ab illo inſitum *Neroni*:
cauſſam auctoremque interfectæ Matris; aliaque quæ homo
vanus, præter fidem præterque omnium Mentem, conviciatur
velute plaufro. Quibus odij Cauſſis? Aut quo mendacij pretio?
Nam *Seneca* tanto anterior non injuriâ, non beneficio cognitus
illi. Sed credo judicij quædam merumque perversitas fuit, quæ
eundem illum in *Ciceronem* exacuit, quæ in *Caffium*, *Brutum*,
omnesque bonos. Caveat ab his, moneo, juventus: & e campis
illis ita antiquitatum & hiftoriæ flores legat, ut non colligat
Venena. *Lipf.* ad Lib. 13. Ann. Comment.

sure to make the last, the worst ; so *Macro* must be worse than *Sejanus* ^g.

But let us consider our Author's Treatment of other illustrious Personages in the Course of his History.

Piso, we are told, was of great Fame among the People for his Virtue ; or, adds our Annalist, *for the Semblance of Virtues* ^h.

Mentioning *Fenius Rufus*, he ascribes to him *segnis Innocentiâ* : i. e. He was a heavy, harmless Creature. Surely he might have deserved some kinder Usage from what the Annalist is obliged to say of him in this very Chapter, *viz.* “ That the Emperor made
“ him Captain of the Guards in Compliment
“ to the People, who loved him for his dis-
“ interested Administration in the Superinten-
“ dancy of the publick Stores ; an Office from
“ which he had drawn no Gain or Advan-
“ tage ⁱ : — And elsewhere he is described by
“ our Author as of a Life and Reputation in
“ general Esteem ^k. ”

Thus *Sylla*'s Innocence is ascribed to his despicable Pusillanimity and Cowardice. ^l

Thus again *Herdeonius Flaccus* is repre-

^g Ann. 6. 48. ^h *Ibid.* 15. 48. ⁱ *Ibid.* 14. 51.

^k *Ibid.* 15. 50. ^l *Ibid.* 13. 47.

fented spiritless, terrified, and only through Stupidity innocent ^m.

Again, how slanderous and wickedly insinuating is the Reflection upon *Otho's* relinquishing his Pleasures *beyond the Hopes of all*: *Eo plus formidinis*, says the Annalist, *afferebant falsæ Vitutes & Vitia reditura*. *Otho* was reform'd at last beyond the Expectation of all Men: Hence no Joy for his appearing Virtues, but more Dread from his returning Vices.

Galba's Character is drawn as ill naturedly and invidiously as there was Room for it. His old Age is made the Subject of Scorn and Contempt; which might as easily have procured him Reverence, at least Pity for the Infirmities to which Mortality is subjectⁿ. “That
“ ’tis said, was called real Wisdom, which in
“ him was real Heaviness: He was rather free
“ from Vices, than endow’d with Virtues.” Mr. *Gordon* says *many Virtues*; which is not in the Original. The Translator probably saw, that the Author contradicted himself, having allowed in this very Chapter; “that he had
“ commanded in the *German Wars* with
“ signal Renown — that as Proconsul in *Afric*,

^m Hist. 1. 56.

ⁿ Ibid. 1. 7.

“ and afterwards in *Spain*, he had behaved
 “ with Moderation, Gentleness and Justice ° :
 “ and that in the Opinion of all Men *he had*
 “ *been capable of Empire had he never been*
 “ *Emperor.*” Where the Author’s own Wit-
 is plainly observable.

When *Pætus* had made *Corbulo* acquainted
 with his own distress’d Condition from the Ap-
 proach of *Vologeses* and the *Parthian Army* :
 “ *Corbulo*, says the Annalist, made no great
 “ Haste ; that the more the Danger encreas’d,
 “ the greater Praise he might reap from bring-
 “ ing Relief ¶.” Yet this same *Corbulo* present-
 ly after begins the shortest Rout, carries with
 him large Quantities of Provisions, that he
 might be able to relieve the distress’d Camp
 effectually, and repel Famine as well as the Foe.
 — He addresses himself to the Legions from
 Rank to Rank ; persuading, exhorting, and
 admonishing : — And the Legions, in Con-
 sequence of these Admonitions and Persuasions
 of their General, are fired with Alacrity for
 the common Cause, — and sped their March
 Day and Night without Intermision ¶.

Mucianus is made to support the Civil War
 (the Event of which at this Time must be

° Hist. I. 49.

¶ Ann. 15. 10.

¶ Ibid. 15. 12.

very dubious) “that he might the more greedily squeeze the Publick^r.” Now, I presume, it was *Mucianus*’s After-Conduct, at this Time not foreseen, which gave Rise to this Reflection; and even that Conduct was capable of a kinder Interpretation than the Historian here gives it. “ ’Tis not to be express’d, saith *Xiphilin*, how much Money *Mucian* amass’d from all Parts, with which he fill’d the Royal Treasury; charging himself with the Hatred of these Exactions to spare *Vespasian*.”

This same *Mucianus* presses *Antonius* by Letters to wait his coming, and herein but urges the Counsel and Orders of *Vaspasian*, contending for a Victory void of Slaughter, and exempt from Tears and Sorrow.

Tho’ the Reasoning was just, and the Policy wise and merciful, yet all this with *Tacitus* is but mere Pretence. “In Reality, says he, *Mucianus* gave this Advice from a Passion for gaining all the Glory, and studying to reserve to himself the intire Honour of the War.” Now should it not be remembered, that the Advice and Orders were from *Vespasian*, and that the General was but pursuing his

† Hist. 2. 84.

† *Xiph.* by *Manning*, Vol. II. p. 41.

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Master's Plan? And can it be imagin'd, that *Vespasian* did this with no other Design, but that all the Glory of the War might devolve upon *Mucianus*?

The Writers nearest those Times say, that *L. Bessus* and *Antonius* deserted *Vitellius*, and came over to *Vespasian* "from a Regard to "Peace, and a Love of the Publick;" which was not improbable, considering the Experience they had of *Vitellius*: But *Tacitus* inclines to believe, that it was from Emulation and Envy, that they overturn'd their former Master, for fear others might have more of his Favour^t.

Upon two Seditions happening in the Army, we are told, that there were not wanting those who believed both these Seditions to have been raised by the Intrigues and Contrivance of *Antony*, that upon himself alone might devolve the Glory and Emoluments of the War^u.

+ This I think a scandalous Insinuation, and not fit to have been mentioned by the same Writer, who had just before related the particular Pains taken by *Antony* to quell both Seditions, and to protect those whom they chiefly threatened.

^t Hist. L. 2. 100.

^u *Ibid.* 3. 11.

In the same Manner he tells us, that *Herdeonius Flaccus*, by a Course of Diffimulation, fomented the first Efforts of *Civilis*^w. And upon *Herdeonius* not pursuing the Plan which *Tacitus* thinks properest, (for be it noted that our Author is both wiser and honest than any General or Statesman he introduces,) a Suspicion is raised, and confidently maintain'd; “ that
 “ by the Co-operation of the chief Comman-
 “ ders the War was kindled; and hence all the
 “ many Evils produc'd by it, or apprehended
 “ from it, were construed to arise from no want
 “ of Bravery in the Soldiers, from no superior
 “ Power in the Enemy, but purely from
 “ the Guile and Baseness of the Leaders.” I desire the Reader to consider how consistent this is with the Character and Conduct of *Herdeonius* just before applauded, as personally advising and directing this very *Civilis*, to drive back the Forces summoned to succour *Vitellius*, and to with-hold the Legions from removing:— And this Advice *Herdeonius* gave, according to our Author, from a Mind well dispos'd towards *Vespasian*, and in Tendernefs to the Commonwealth, on which present Destruction was sure-

^w Hist. 4. 17, 18.

ly falling were the War renewed — and so many thousand Men poured into *Italy*^x.

Vocula, in a Battle with the *Germans*, gains the Victory; yet must be blamed for not pursuing it. Indeed the Generals on both Sides are blamed, as I think few Characters or Measures to be found in *Tacitus*, are without Blame or Censure. 'Tis very easy from the Event, to judge of the Measures that might have been necessary to prevent bad Consequences, or improve Advantages. To judge of the Propriety of Measures from the Event, is far from judging equally. What might be the wisest Measures that can be pursued by Generals, (as possibly might be the Case of *Vocula* here,) may by a carping, opiniotative, sedentary Critic be judged from viewing Consequences (at the Time of Action not to be foreseen by mere Mortals,) weak, irrational, careless, or dishonest. But *Vocula's* Delay was not attended with the bad Consequences, which can justify the Charge of ill Conduct upon him: He raised the Siege of the Camp with fresh Slaughter of the Enemy, and a second Victory. He could have done no more with the utmost Expedition. “ But he might have rais'd it sooner.” — Yet for

^x Hist. 4. 12.

any Thing our Author knows to the contrary, a forc'd March with harrafs'd Troops might have ruin'd the whole Design. Let what our Author seems to approve in the Conduct of *Suetonius Paulinus*, who under great Disadvantages did not instantly attack the Troops of *Vitellius* commanded by *Cecina*, be here applied. "It is Time enough to conquer, says that wise General, when sufficient Precaution is taken that we be not conquered." Where, by the by, the Applause is intended to the Wit, as well as to the Conduct of *Paulinus*.

But to do our Author Justice, he uses all Sides and all Characters alike: If *Herdeonius*, and *Vocula*, and *Antony*, are blamed, so are *Civilis*, and *Classicus*, and *Tutor*, and every Body, noble and ignoble, that comes in his Way.

When *Sabinus* was press'd by many principal Citizens, to take Part with his Brother *Vespasian*, he received not the Advice heartily and chearfully. "There were some, says the Historian, who blamed him, as through Envy and Emulation, retarding his Brother's Fortune."

Surprizing indeed (as well as notoriously false, as appear'd by the Event,) that a Brother should carry his Envy so far, as to obstruct,

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or not promote the Measures taken, to place the Empire of *Rome* in a Brother's Family; and consequently should envy himself so distinguish'd a Place of Honour in the World.

The Historian adds, " that he was believ'd to
 " have propp'd his Brother's Credit, otherwise
 " sinking, and, for the Money lent, to have received in Pledge his House and Possessions :"
Unde, quanquam manente in speciem concordia, offensarum aperta metuebantur. Strange again ! If *Vespasian* had mortgaged his Estate to his Brother *Sabinus*, could any Thing be more wish'd for by the Mortgagee, than an Empire to repay him ². (*Mucianus* it seems, as has been already observ'd, lent freely, from a Prospect of making more free with the publick Treasure hereafter.) Nor could *Vespasian*; one would imagine, be displeased to find a Brother able and willing to support his sinking Credit ; — a Brother, whose cordial Affection should not have been called in Question by the same Writer, who has related how he sacrificed his Life

² They had heard it said, that *Edward* the Fourth of *England* recovered the City of *London*, and by that the Kingdom, by the vast Debts that he owed there ; Men looking upon the helping of him to the Crown, as the helping themselves to their Money, which was else desperate. Lord *Clarend.* Hist. Vol. I. part 2. 800. p. 634.

in the Cause of his Brother. The Affair of the Mortgage, whence only these *Operta offensarum* could arise, was probably nothing more than Hearsay, Report, or Suspicion; which, when not sufficiently grounded, ought rather to be confuted, or buried in Silence than blazon'd, by a candid and honest Historian.

Upon *Sabinus's* being slain, we have his Character. "Five and fifty Years he had
" bore Arms for the Common-wealth, and
" both in Peace and War bore a very signal
" Reputation; and in the Innocency of his
" Life, and the Justice of his Actions, was
" unspotted."

Here, it had been well if our Author had stopped; but he must let us know, "that he
" talk'd too much, — and in the End of his
" Life some judg'd him cowardly or spiritless;
" while many thought him prudent and moderate, and desirous to spare the Blood of
" his Fellow-Citizens^a."

Now had not this Peccadillo of his being a great Talker, and the Opinion of his Cowardice or Sloth, entertain'd by a few, been as well left out as admitted to stain this faultless Character? Should an Historian adopt every

^a Hist. 3. 75.

idle Opinion or sinister Report to an honest Man's Disadvantage? Nothing less than a personal Knowledge, or Information, founded upon the best Authority, should be Warrant for handing down to Posterity, such Strokes of Calumny and Malice. Yet how often does our Author repeat the Phrase, *Nec defuere qui suspicionibus arguerent?* — Are the Suspicions of the worst of Men, and the bold Scandals of the profess'd Enemies to every Virtue, to be allow'd a Place in History? Are not the Generality of Mankind still wicked, and more willing to admit Scandal, than vindicate Innocence, from a sordid and selfish Principle too commonly observable of envying superiour Virtue, and blackening Men better than themselves?

Tacitus himself has a peculiar Talent at Slander. I know few of his Characters of the laudable Side, but where 'tis to blacken another. Thus *Germanicus* is most pompously extoll'd to blacken *Piso*; and *Piso*, as we before observ'd, is attempted to be clear'd from *Germanicus's* Death, in order to load *Tiberius* the more. Thus *Blæsus's* Innocence is carefully display'd to blacken his Murderer *Vitellius*^b.

^b Hist. 3. 39.

Upon other Occasions *Tacitus* is very shy of his Encomiums ; or, when he would give you a fine Character, it must be invidiously drawn, and rais'd upon the Ruin of other Men's. It must be a Negative Excellence, designed more to expose the Defects of others than to exhibit the real and positive Virtues of the Person applauded. He is detracting while he is applauding, and snarles even in his Panegyrics. Observe the following Instance: *Ingenium illustre alterius studiis juvenis admodum dedit. NON UT PLERIQUE UT NOMINE MAGNIFICO SEGNE OTIUM VELARET* ^c.

'Tis indeed a fine Character he here gives us of *Helvidius Priscus* : Wherein he too gives us his own Knowledge of the Stoic Philosophy ; but still he must admit a Stroke of Envy to soil this lovely Portrait: *Erant quibus appetentior Famæ videretur* : Which seems purposely admitted to introduce his own Reflection: *Quando etiam sapientibus Cupido gloriæ novissime exuitur*. *Priscus's* Vigour and Firmness are also call'd in Question ; tho' the Historian could not be ignorant, that both these

^c Hist. 4. 5.

Charges, his too great Love of Fame, and want of Constancy, are directly contrary to the Principles of that Philosophy, of which he makes *Priscus* not a nominal, but a real and serious Professor.

To give more Instances of our Author's Malignity of Temper and Propensity to Scandal, is as unnecessary as it is disagreeable. I will only add, that the Times, bad as they were, which he makes the Subject of his Story, gave not Scope enough for his slanderous Disposition. After knowing our Author's Affectation of Antiquity and Taste for Politicks, it is not at all a Wonder to find the Names of *Marius*, *Scylla*, and *Pompey*, not pass'd unnoticed: And considering his Talent at Slander, it had been still more a Wonder to have found them mentioned without Obloquy. They had, without Doubt, all their Failings, and the two former may be justly styled "*the Curses of their Country.*" But observe how our Author characterizes them: — *Marius* OF THE LEES OF THE PEOPLE: *Scylla* THE CRUELEST OF THE NOBILITY, over-turn'd the Liberty of *Rome*: AND *Pompey* NO BETTER THAN EITHER ^d. — To see the Disparity between the

^d Hist. 2. 38.

Characters of *Marius* and *Scylla*, and *Pompey*, I refer the Reader to the *Life of Cicero*, by Dr. *Middleton*; a Writer, who must be allowed a competent Judge in this Case.

Our Author seems indeed to forget himself in the preceding Book, where he makes the People to distinguish as justly, and reason as regularly, and be as witty, as maliciously witty, as *Tacitus* himself could have been : — *Man-
sisse C. Julio, mansisse Cæsare Augusto IMPE-
RIUM, mansuram fuisse sub Pompeio Brutoque
REPUBLICAM. Nunc pro Othone an pro
Vitellio in Tempia ituros? Utrasque impias
Preces, utraque detestanda Vota inter duos,
quorum Bello solum id scires, deteriorem fore
qui vicisset* ^e.

I cannot help thinking (tho' the Remark properly belongs to another Place) that the Distinction and Judgment of the People here, is much too refined at that Time of Day, when little Regard was had to the Publick under any Name or Form of Government: The Senate and People of *Rome* our Author soon after calls ANTIQUATED NAMES^f; and these very People are represented, “ as having neither Sin-
“ cerity, nor Judgment, but idolizing any

^e Hist. I. 50.

^f *Ibid.* c. 55.

“ Empe-

“ Emperor, whosoever he were, by Applau-
 “ ses usual and extravagant.”

I cannot conclude this Chapter without lamenting, that an Historian of our own Nation, under the Direction of a better Light, and the clearer Authority of a divine Law than our Author enjoy'd, should have indulged so greatly this malevolence of Temper.

Dr. *Burnet*, Bishop of *Salisbury*, it must be own'd, says many good Things; and speaks with the Sincerity of one, who believed and acted as he spake: At the same Time it is evident, that he had strong Passions and Prejudices, and too readily gave in to vulgar Reports and secret Intelligences that favour'd his own Opinions of Persons or Things, and flatter'd his own Self-love; which often disposes him to cast a Shade on the Virtues and Conduct of others. He frequently approves or condemns Measures as he likes the Man that proposes or pursues them, and the Man as he liked his Principles, or shared in his Favour or Displeasure. When Malevolence, private Interest, Passion, and Party-Zeal, direct the Pen of an Historian, he justly forfeits the Esteem of the cool and the candid. Add to this the Bishop's intem-

perate Rage against Vice, which sometimes seems to be too flaming, and to hurry him out of Temper, Moderation, and Charity. With a Writer of this Turn, unhappy Accidents are improv'd into formal Mischief: Indiscretions are branded with the Name of Impiety: Levities are unpardonable; and to be without Vice, is but a Negative Goodness, which rather invites his Censure than Applause. In short, the Bishop, if we may judge from his Writings, was a Man of good Sense and real Piety; yet, upon Occasions, he shews all the Indignation of a disappointed Courtier; and, notwithstanding his profess'd Principles, has all the fiery and uncharitable Spirit of an Inquisitor.

How unhappy is it, that by Education, Passion, Party, or any other Consideration, a good Man should be transported and misled from the Rule of Good and Just; should give the Lie to his own Doctrine, and propagate Scandal and Falsehood for GOD and CHRIST's Sake!

How observable is the Conduct of the Sacred Historians in this Respect! They make no Reflections on Persons or Things, however blameable. The Reader is generally left to

form his own Judgment of Men from their Actions, related in plain Colours, without Exaggeration or Detraction, Surmize or Conjecture. From *Cain* to *Judas* I remember few or no Characters described in any other Manner, than by the Facts ascribed to them in the Course of the History. The longest Character in *Scripture* scarce exceeds a Line, or a Verse; and in which you perceive not one Stroke of Prejudice or Partiality to favour or blacken any Man mentioned. Reports, Suspicions, or sinister Insinuations have here no Place. The Writers intrude not upon you with their Comments, and indeed never appear. Their Design seems plainly to have been to inform others, not to display themselves: And here they have been remarkably successful: You are wholly intent upon the Story, not the Authors. From hence we may easily judge by what Spirit they wrote.

C H A P. V.

OF Kin to this Malevolence of Temper in our Author, is that Irony and Scur- rility, Satyr, Raillery, and abusive Wit, which every where abound in the Mouths of his Speakers. “ Raillery, says a very polite Wri- ter, is a Fault, which very witty Men are “ seldom wise enough to shun^h.” And never Author gave a fuller Proof of the Truth of this Observation, than *Tacitus*. The Troops sneer their Generals: The Subjects their Prince: The Senate their Emperor: Com- manders fight Tongue-Battles; and the Sol- diers on both Sides are frequently as scurrilous as their Leaders.

To give a few Instances in Proof of this Charge against *Tacitus*.

The Speech of *Arminius* is sneering, faty- rical, and witty quite throughⁱ. The Speeches of *Germanicus* and *Arminius* to their Ar- mies before Engaging, are full of Abuse and Reflections upon each other; particularly that of *Arminius*^k. This General again encou-

^h Observations on the Life of *Cicero*, p. 55.

ⁱ Ann. I. 59.

^k *Ibid.* 2. 14.

raging the Battle against *Maroboduus*, is quite scurrilous and abusive : *Neque Maroboduus probris in hostem abstinebat* ¹. *Caractacus*, animating his Troops, is satirically witty ^m. The wretched and cowardly Troops of *Pætus* are witty and sneering upon the Surrenders at *Caudium* and *Numantia*, tho' they were going from these Precedents to take the same Measures ⁿ. *Nero*, instead of punishing *Pætus* for Cowardice and ill Conduct, only lashes him with sarcastical Raillery ^o. *Otho* and *Vitellius* are represented *rixantes & supra & flagitia invicem objectantes* ^p. Their different Armies reproach each other, and are animated in the Fight, not by applauding or remembering the Virtues of their Emperors, but by the abundant Infamy each Army found to reproach the General with against whom they fought ^q. *Cæcina* and *Valens*, tho' both of one Side, sneer and traduce each other ^r.

The *Parthians* are maliciously witty against their new King *Venones*, and call him *Mancipium Cæsaris* ^s. *Piso* is scurrilous

¹ Ann. 2. 45.

^m Ibid. 12. 34.

ⁿ Ibid. 15. 13.

^o Ibid. 15. 25.

^p Hist. 1. 74.

^q Ibid. 2. 20.

^r Ibid. 2. 30.

^s Ibid. 2. 2.

against

against the *Athenians*, and objects to them their unsuccessful Attempts against the *Macedonians*, and the cruel Usage of their own brave Citizens^t.

This is truly hard upon them; for with the same Breath, he will not allow them to be the Posterity of the ancient *Athenians*, but calls them "the Scum of Nations^u." When *Piso's* and *Agrippina's* Fleets meet, *Tacitus* prepares us for an Engagement, but it ends in a scolding Bout^w. Upon *Plancina's* being screened from her Prosecutors on the Part of *Germanicus*, one would have expected good Men mourning (as our Author sometimes represents them naturally enough^x) upon so melancholy an Occasion; but we find them bitter, poignant, and satirical in their Reflections on the Emperor and his Mother^y. Upon the Revolt of the *Gauls* being reported at *Rome*, you find the Citizens most wantonly witty against *Tiberius*^z. When he begs the Questorship for *Nero*, the Son of *Germanicus*, before the Legal Time, he is laugh'd at by the Hear-

^t Ann. 2. 55.

^u *Ibid.*

^w *Ibid.* 2. 79.

^x — *Optimus quisque reipublicæ causâ mærebat.* Ann. 3. 44.

^y Ann. 3. 17.

^z *Ibid.* 3. 44.

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ers. — *Non sine in risu audientium postulavit*^a: Tho' this is a little surprising, that the Senate should be so familiar with this sanguinary Tyrant; and still more surprising, that this same Senate should be soon after represented attending with many Tears to this same Tyrant, when recommending *Drusus*, and this very *Nero* to their Protection^b. *Drusus's* Letter, tho' modest and acknowledging the Honour of the Tribunician Power conferred upon him, is receiv'd as the proudest; and the Reflections suppos'd to be made upon this Occasion, are severe and satirically bitter^c; tho' the Vices of this Prince had but a few Chapters before been palliated by these same Reflecters, in order to expose the greater Crimes of the Emperor his Father^d.

The Reflections upon *Nero's* Youth and Incapacity, are cutting and witty^e. *Poppea* sarcastically reproaches him, and calls him *Pupil*^f. The same *Poppea* can afford *Octavia* no better a Character than "The Adulteress of an *Egyptian* Minstrel^g." *Agrippina*, the Mother of *Nero*, in the Height

^a Ann. 3. 29.

^b *Ibid.* 4. 8.

^c *Ibid.* 3. 59.

^d *Ibid.* 3. 37.

^e *Ibid.* 13. 6.

^f *Ibid.* 14. 1.

^g *Ibid.* 14. 61.

of her Rage and Resentment is maliciously witty and scurrilous. — “ She would go to
“ the Army with *Britannicus*; where on
“ one Side would be heard the Daughter of
“ *Germanicus*; on the other, *Burrus* and *Se-*
“ *neca*; the first with his maimed Hand, the
“ second with the Style of a Pedagogue, con-
“ testing with Her the Sovereign Rule of
“ human Kind ^h. ”

Agrippina, the Wife of *Germanicus*, in the Height of her Grief, and *Sabinus*, when dragg'd to Execution, are both maliciously witty against *Tiberius* ⁱ. Tho' our Author lays it down as a Maxim, in this very Case of *Sabinus* — *Molles sunt in calamitate mortalium animi* ^k.

In the Debate amongst *Galba's* Friends, Whether he should go forth of his Palace to oppose *Otho* or not, You have Maxims of Policy, and excellent Reasons on both Sides: And yet in this very momentous Consultation is found Room for Sneer and Irony ^l.

It would be tedious to observe how frequently the Speakers in *Tacitus* treat each

^h Ann. 13. 14.

ⁱ *Ibid.* 4. 52. 70.

^k Ann. 4. 68.

^l *Hist.* 1. 32, 3.

other *obliquâ insectatione* ; and how often this Phrase occurs. If some of our Author's Commentators had better understood his Manner and Temper, they would not have attempted, as some of them have done, to alter the Text as spurious ; and substituted, instead of *OBLIQUA*, *OBLITA insectatione* : Which is a Phrase I remember not to have ever met with in any *Roman* Writer.



C H A P. VI.

AFTER this harsh and unfavourable Account of *Tacitus*, it may reasonably be ask'd, wherein his Excellency lies, and whence comes it, that his Writings have been the Study of Scholars, a Lesson for Statesmen, and the Delight of Kings?

I answer; his refined Wit, Sagacity, and Turn for Politicks; or his general Observations on Men and Things, have been the Cause of his being studied and admired.

And even here, consider'd as a Writer of Annals or History, I think, he has given great Room for Censure, and is very justly blameable. Many of the Observations are evidently his own, and not theirs, to whom they are ascribed; many of them quite inconsistent with the Characters they are given to; and many of the Actions he relates might, and probably did, proceed from other more natural Motives, and Principles less refined, than those assign'd by the Author.

Tiberius, we are told, turn'd to his own Glory, and ascribed to himself as meritorious, even Chance-work or Accident. Thus
our

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our Author politically refines upon common Contingencies: You every where meet with Art, Design, sinister Motives, false Pretences, and subtle Reasons. He allows nothing to what we call Chance and Fortune; they have scarce a Place in his Writings, except where they are admitted to govern the World. All is deduc'd regularly from a Chain of human Causes, and even Death is scarce permitted to exert the Right of Nature without a Poison. "Reason goes before every Enterprize, and Counsel before every Action." Every Sex and Age, all Professions, People of all Conditions and Quality, Barbarians as well as Greeks, Bond, and Free, are all Wits or Politicians. Every Mouth that opens is an Oracle of Wisdom. Upon the most improbable Occasions, where the Distress is signal, the Time tempestuous, the Passions in a Ferment, you have Politicks, Morals, Proverbs, Wit, and Epigram.

Most of *Tacitus's* Princes are eminent Speakers, and deep Politicians; but, I think, with some Impropropriety, and to the Discredit of the Author, who must needs shew his Wisdom upon all Occasions, tho' at the Expence of Truth and Decency.

We

We allow *Augustus* a wise Prince; tho' an ingenious Modern would confine his Maxims of Policy to very few in Number^m. Be this as it will: Our Author's Description of the State of the *Roman* Empire, and the Arts by which this Prince fortified his Dominion and Power, must be allowed, tho' in few Words, very full and just: And whether the Arts were practised by *Augustus* or not, *Tacitus* has shewn himself that great Master in Politicks, which he would make this Prince.

Tiberius's Character is indeed wonderfully drawn; and such, I imagine, as *Tacitus* would paint that of the most absolute and artful Tyrant to be; but I cannot believe there ever was such a Character in the World.

A short Sketch of it I shall here attempt, as it may be gathered from different Parts of the first six Annals.

Tiberius commends the Man whom he envies and hates; caresses and smiles on the Man he is going to destroy; and laments the untimely Fate of the Person he murders; — he loves Dissimulation, but hates the Discovery of it; the greater his Resent-

^m Reflections on ancient and modern History, p. 20.

ment, he dissembles it the more; smothers his present Passion, and hoards it up for future Vengeance; and murders the Man, whose Services he is unable to repay; — he hates Flattery, yet fears Liberty of Speech; pretends he would have kept silent, what he discovers by the Means of others; he loves, and makes Use of Informations, yet hates the Informer; whom he preserves from the Insults of others, to be destroyed by himself; — he affects to complain, where there is no Occasion of Offence; — he abhors Liberty, yet abhors the Betrayer of it; establishes Slavery, yet looks with Contempt on the Slave; — puts a Stop to any Measures form'd to restrain his Authority, under Pretence that they tend to increase his Power; — he prosecutes new Crimes under the old Forms; and affects to preserve the Constitution, but it was in the Ceremonial only, while he stabs it in the Vitals; and fortifies a real Tyranny, while he allows the Senate a Shadow of their ancient Jurisdiction; nay chides them for casting all the public Cares upon him, when it might have been Rebellion and Treason to have offer'd to relieve him; — he praises the Severity of
the

the Senate with the same Breath that he recommends Lenity; not blaming the Man who propos'd the sanguinary Sentence, yet commending *Lepidus* who oppos'd it.

His Speeches are worthy of the wisest Legislator of *Greece*, or the warmest Patriot of *Rome*; his Actions more cruel and arbitrary, if possible, than those of Eastern Tyrants. *Brutus* and *Cassius* could not speak better; *Domitian* and *Nero* could not act worse. Considering the excellent Sense and profound Wisdom, which appear in his Speeches and Conduct, in the Beginning of his Reign, one would almost think it impossible he should turn out the Monster he is after described. He must either be not so wicked, or not so wise as he is represented. It should seem, as if *Tiberius* was indeed the wisest Prince *Tacitus* had to bring upon the Stage; and therefore the properest Character on whom to charge all the fine Things he is pleased to put in his Mouth.

Yet wise and politick as *Tiberius* is represented, he has Occasion for Counsel, that *Sallustius Crispus* may be introduc'd with his Politicksⁿ; where I cannot help obser-

ⁿ Ann. i. 8.

ving, that this Advice of his, as also many of the wise Maxims and fine Things in *Tacitus*, are suppos'd to have been given and said in Private; and were *inter arcanum imperii*: And it seems wonderful how our Author came to such a particular Knowledge of them, unless we may suspect, that many of *Tacitus's* Personages are introduc'd on Purpose to say fine Things, and make shrewd Observations: If this was not the Case, one would imagine, that *Tiberius* and *Livia* wanted not Tutors in Tyranny.

The other Princes in *Tacitus*, tho' of far meaner Abilities than *Tiberius*, are not without their Share of Cunning and political Wisdom. *Caligula*, tho' acknowledg'd of a tempestuous Genius, yet had learned all the hollow Guises of Diffimulation°.

Claudius is represented a weak and insignificant Wretch, stupid and defective in his Understanding, the Tool of his Women and favourite Freed-men; yet his Advice to the *Parthians* and *Meberdates*, whom he sent as their King, is as wise as the wisest could give, or the tenderest Shepherd of his People practise^p.

° Ann. 6. 45.

^p *Ibid.* 12. 11.

His Speech, in Favour of his new Senators, shews him both a Wit, and a Politician⁹. Every Thing is indeed said on both Sides, by them that oppose the Admission, and *Claudius* who promotes it, that could possibly be said by any Body on the like Occasion. And the same may be observ'd of the Debates in *Tacitus* on other Occasions. The Author's Fund of Materials and Literature is laid out as decently as can be on the opposite Parties; and he furnishes both Sides so plentifully with Reasons and plausible Pretexts, that the Reader knows not, from weighing Arguments, on which Side the Right lies.

Nor can it be said in Favour of *Tacitus*, that Princes are but the Mouths of their Ministers: For in a fair Trial of Skill, we

⁹ It must be confess'd, that some Part of *Claudius's* Speech, or Sentiments of the same Kind and Meaning, is to be found in the Inscription at *Lyons*, which *Lipsius* has transcribed into his *Excursions*: And thence it may be concluded, that *Tacitus*, in this and the other Speeches, ascribed to his Princes, follow'd exact Truth. I cannot think so; and give this very Speech of *Claudius* as a Proof of the contrary. There is neither the Wit, nor the Sarcasm in the Inscription; both which, and of *Tacitus's* own Turn, are visible in the Speech he here ascribes to *Claudius*.

find the Royal Pupil (*Nero*) an Over-match for his Tutor and Minister, *Seneca*; tho' the Philosopher made a premeditated Speech; and the Emperor, whose Want of Elocution was before complain'd of, spoke extempore. Instead of the gay Reveller, we find him here an egregious Stoic^r; and he is afterwards represented as concealing his Hate and Resentment, under as smiling an Appearance as the hoariest Tyrant of them all^t.

Galba, the Historian, would persuade us, that he was weak and credulous, the Property of rapacious Ministers and selfish Favourites; yet his Speech to *Piso*, upon adopting him his Successor, is full of the justest and wisest Maxims that can be well imagin'd, or conceiv'd^t. *Seneca* could not with more Truth and Wisdom have instituted his Royal Charge; nor *Plato* himself taught the *Sicilian* Tyrant a finer Lesson. 'Tis a Composition of good Morality, good Policy, and good Philosophy; and, I think, far from the real Character of *Galba*, if what *Tacitus* says of him upon another Occasion be true—

^r Ann. 14. 12.

^t *Ibid.* 14. 56.

^t Hist. 1. 14. 56.

Quod segnities [in Galba] erat, sapientia vocabatur^r.

Piso, whom he had adopted, though the Time between his Adoption and Murder, was but a very few Days, must be brought upon the Stage, to shew what an Adept in Politicks he was: And indeed the Speech he makes is a most glorious one^r: *Tacitus* makes him speak once for all. But I cannot help thinking, that the Reflections are too philosophical, cool, and abstracted for the Confusion attending such a Commotion [*turbidis rebus*] wherein the Empire is transferred.

Otho's Resolutions of attempting to seize the Empire, I should say, his Thoughts about it (for those, 'tis plain, our Author knew perfectly well) are wise and politic, and proper in his Circumstances, and had the Cause he was engaged in been righteous, great and glorious^r. He reasons like the deepest Politician, and resolves with a Greatness of Soul becoming *Alexander* or *Cæsar*. *Mortem omnibus ex natura æqualem, oblivione apud posteros vel gloria distingui*: Thus the gallant *Sarpedon*, in *Homer*.

^r Hist. i. 49. ^r Ibid. i. 32, 33, 34. ^r Ibid. i. 21.

*Since Age, Disease, or some less noble End,
 Tho' not less certain, doth our Days attend:
 Since 'tis decreed, and to this Period lead
 A thousand Ways, the noblest Path we'll tread;
 And bravely on, till they, or we, or all,
 A common Sacrifice to Honour fall^u.*

The Reader will judge whether such Thoughts are becoming the Character of a Man, who, in the next Chapter, is represented as One passionately fond of the Allurements of a Court, the Delicacy of Revelry, the Choice of Wives, the Choice of Women, and unbridled Wantonness and Excess. *Tacitus* saw the Inconsistency of such great Resolves with such a Character, and so by Way of Apology, says, *Non erat Othoni mollis & corpori similis animus*. But his whole Life gives the Lie to this Remark, and proves him to have been miserably debauch'd.

His Speech in the Camp shews him a most consummate Politician, Patriot, and Philosopher: Some of the Thoughts are surprizingly great, and seem much too refined and philosophical for the Speaker, the Au-

^u Il. 12. Sir John Denham.

dience,

dience, or the Occasion. They might have become the *Areopagus*, or a *Roman Senate*, in the most virtuous *Æra* of the Republic^w. Yet this is that same *Otho*, who is afterwards represented, upon the Comparison with *Vitellius*, as *Luxu, Sevitia, Audacia reipublicæ exitiosior*^x.

Vitellius is described as having *segne ingenium*; yet presently he starts up Wit and Politician; for upon hearing of the Revolt of the Legions in higher *Germany*, he concludes *minore discrimine sumi principem quam quæri*^y: which whoever sees not to be the Author's own Wit, must confess he knows Nothing of *Tacitus's* Manner. Again, when he is acquainted with the Revolt of the first Legion from him, he suppress'd the Name of *Vespasian*^z: and sent for Assistance from *Britain, Germany* and the *Spains*, *segniter & necessitatem dissimulans*^a.

The youthful *Titus's* Deliberations, whether he should proceed to *Rome*, or not, upon the News of *Galba's* Death, are as wise as the wisest could imagine or form^b; and tho' gay and amorous, in his Advice

^w Hist. 1. 83, 4.

^z Ibid. 2. 96.

^x Ibid. 2. 31.

^a Ibid. 2. 97.

^y Ibid. 1. 56.

^b Ibid. 2. 1.

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to his Father, he is as grave a Moralift, and as fententious, as the fageft Statesman or Philofopher in *Tacitus*^c. The Advice had come much better from a Father to a Son. Here, as in feveral other Parts of his Works, our Author has imitated *Saluft*. *Non legiones, non classes, falth Titus, perinde firma imperii munimenta quam numerum liberorum, &c.* In *Saluft* it is: *Neu malis alienos adjungere, quam fanguine conjunctos retinere. Non exercitus neque Thefauri pæfidia regni funt verum amici*^d. But here it is the aged *Mecipfa*, who, with Propriety and Decency enough, gives the Advice to the young Princes.

We need not then wonder at the wife Reflections and juft Measures taken by the Father *Vefpafian*, and his General *Mucianus*, to wrefte the Empire from *Vitellius*.

Vefpafian's private Reflections are very politic for a military Man^e; whence *Tacitus* knew his private Doubts and Deliberations, I am ignorant: But his wavering I can eafily account for, viz. That the Hiftorian might more plaufibly introduce *Mucianus* to make his celebrated Speech to over-rule thefe Doubts

^c Hift. 4. 52. ^d p. 70. Ed. Oxon. ^e *Ibid.* 2. 74, 5.
of

of *Vespasian*. Had *Mucianus* made this Speech in Private (tho' our Author for Decorum's Sake allows he had much Discourse, no Doubt to the same Purpose, with *Vespasian* in Secret) *Tacitus* could not so properly have given it us in its full Length and just Proportion; therefore we have *Mucianus* speaking in Publick (*coram*) to overrule *Vespasian's* private Scruples.

Sir *H. Savil* has a Remark, not unsuitable to the foregoing, and which shews that he saw plainly into this Foible of *Tacitus*.
 " Having set forward *Mucianus* in his
 " Way, here he returneth again to talk of
 " the Preparation somewhat disorderly, and
 " peradventure to draw in that Saying of
 " *Mucianus*, *Pecunias esse belli civilis ner-*
 " *vos* ^f."

Upon Occasion of this fine Harangue of *Mucianus*, I would observe, that all, or most of the Speeches in *Tacitus*, let who will be the Speakers, are pretty much in the same Style: Abound with Wit, fine Thoughts, and deep Reflections. I may add, that the Wit is pretty much of the same Cast; has mostly an Epigrammatical Turn, and a very

^f Sir *H. Savil's* Translat. Hist. 2. 24. Note.

comprehensive Conciseness: As his Wisdom is frequently the Ostentation of a Philosophy pompous and sounding, rather than just and natural; and the Policy more refined than the common Course of Men and Things admits.

The Wit, the Philosophy, and Policy are generally all his own; different Characters could never have spoke and acted with that Sameness and Uniformity; for 'tis not to the *Roman* Emperors alone, and their prime Ministers, that this political Wisdom is ascribed: Barbarian Princes are as great Masters of the Craft as the *Roman*: Generals are as witty and well-skill'd in the Mysteries of the Cabinet as the Camp: The common Soldiers reflect as Subtilty as their Commanders; and the Mob upon Occasion may dispute the Prize of Wisdom with them all.

The young *Rhadamistus* is more cunning than his Uncle *Mithridates* §.

The political Remark of *Tiridates* very well deserves our Consideration; *Id in summa fortuna æquius quod validius: sua retinere privatæ domus, de alienis certare re-*

§ Hist. 2. 44.

giam laudem esse^h. Does not this Policy seem too greatly wicked for a barbarous Prince, or at least highly improper from the Mouth of one deprived of his own Kingdoms? *Tiridates, regni profugus*. 'Tis the Policy of Hell, of F—, or of *Tacitus*.

The two Kings *Rhescuperis* and *Cotys* live in a hollow and dissembled Friendshipⁱ. *Izotes*, King of the *Adiobeni*, is a false and double Character^k. *Cartismunda* is instructed *callidis artibus*^l. *Civilis* is *ultra quam barbaris solitum ingenio solers*, — *ultra barbaros sagax*, — & *dolo grassandum ratus* — & *arte donisque*^m. These are Softenings in their Characters, to make the Politicks of these Barbarians more decently pass with the Reader.

Civilis's Speech in Favour of Liberty, and to rouse the *Gauls* to shake off the *Roman* Yoak, has in it all the Policy, Wit and Irony, so peculiar to *Tacitus*ⁿ.

Valentinus and *Tutor* act the Part of *Achizophel*, in making *Absalom* lye with his Father's Wives; They slay *Herennius* and Nu-

^h Ann. 15. 1.

ⁱ *Ibid.* 2. 64.

^k *Ibid.* 12. 13.

^l *Ibid.* 12. 40.

^m Hist. 4. 13—16, 17,—29.

ⁿ *Ibid.* 4. 17. 32.

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mifus, Commanders of the Legions; thence to strengthen the common Band of Iniquity and Guilt, by precluding all Hopes of Pardon^o.

Ilatus's Arrival among the *Germans* was very agreeable to that People: But too popular to please the Factions who desert him: Upon which, *Ilatus's* remaining Friends make this wise Remark; *falso libertatis vocabulum ab iis usurpatum, qui privatim degeneres, in publicum exitiosi, nihil spei nisi per discordias habeant*^p: A general Observation, and applicable to the Factious in all States; but would have been peculiarly proper in the Mouth of One, who had seen the civil Discords in the *Roman Republick*, and the Heads of them, *Anthony*, *Clodius*, and *Cæsar*.

Thus the *Germans* reflect upon the Capitol being burnt in a Style and Manner, which would appear much more natural and familiar to a superstitious *Roman*: *Captam olim à Gallis urbem, sed integra Jovis sede mansisse imperium; fatali nunc igne signum cælestis iræ datum*^q. — Much in the same Manner *Tacitus* himself reflects upon a like

^o Hist. 47. 70.

^p Ann. 11. 17.

^q Hist. 4. 54.

Occasion,

Occasion. *Id facinus post conditam urbem
luctuosissimum fœdissimumque — Sedem Jovis
Opt. Max. auspicato à majoribus pignus im-
perii conditam, quam non Porsena dedita
urbe oreque Galli capta, temerare potuif-
sent* ^r.

Thus too the *Tenētenians*, sending a De-
putation to the People of *Cologne*, desire them
“ to resume the native Institutions of *Ger-*
“ *many*; by shaking off all foreign Luxury
“ and Voluptuousness; to which, say our De-
“ puties, the *Romans* owe much more than
“ to their Arms, the Establishment of their
“ Power over subdued Nations ^r.” Thus you
have Barbarians reflecting on the Vices and
Arts of Government practis’d by the *Romans*,
as acutely as our Satyrift and Politician could
himself have done.

In assum’d or fictitious Characters, it is very
difficult, if not impossible, to preserve Deco-
rum and Nature. This is very observable in
Books, daily publish’d among us as of foreign
Extraction: For Instance, in the *Persian Let-
ters*, the *European*, notwithstanding all his
Art and Ingenuity, plainly discovers himself.
A critical Acumen, a political Sagacity, and a

^r Hist. 3. 72.

^r Ibid. 4. 64.

fatyrical

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satyrical Vein exercis'd on Characters, Manners, and Measures of Government, plainly betray a Writer familiar with his Subject, and attach'd or oppos'd, through Passion, or Interest to some Opinions and Practices in Vogue; and not a cool and distant Spectator.

All that can be said in Defence of *Tacitus* is, that few Writers have been able to divest themselves of some peculiar Cast in their Compositions. His own favourite Opinions, Studies, Complexion, or Passions, are apt imperceptibly to steal upon an Author, and shew themselves, in some Shape or other, where the Impropriety is obvious to every considerate and dispassionate Reader.

In every *Eclogue* of *Virgil*, I think, you have Philosophy, or Sublimity: In the *Æneid*, *Euryalus's* Mother laments as pompously as *Andromache*, or *Hecuba* could do; and the Hero *Æneas* is as poetical as the Poet himself could be. The virtuous Soul of *Fenelon* is transfus'd into his amiable Adventures of *Telemachus*. And thus, if I might, without offering Violence to the Manes of Mr. *Addison*, I should say, that in his *Cato* you read his own fine Sense, excellent Morality, and polished Language. 'Tis over-crowd-
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ed with Sentiment and Philosophy, and too elegant and beautiful even for *Cato*, and much more for his Daughters, should you allow them a far longer Time to moralize in; much less can we imagine so many just Truths and shining Thoughts to have occur'd within the Period of the Drama. 'Tis however happy, when Genius is thus exerted in the Cause of Virtue: The Impropriety such Writers commit, is amply made Amends for by the Improvement they occasion. Their Deviation from the Rules of Art, is perhaps a Virtue, as human Nature is ennobled by such Productions. 'Tis a more fatal and unpardonable Error, when the Wickedness of an Author's Heart is diffus'd in his Writings, and stains the Characters and Actions he has to deal with: Thus not only the gay, redundant Wit, but the lewd Disposition of *Ovid* appear in the Conduct and Conversation of his Gods. Such Writers fall under a double Censure; as both transgressing the Rules of Art, and promoting the Cause of Immorality.

Tacitus at present stands charged only with the first of these: Politicks, being his favourite Study, have tainted most of the Characters and Transactions he meddles with. His Generals,
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it has been before observed, are politic and artful, and fitter for the Cabinet than the Camp. The military Affairs he relates, are frequently carried on by Craft and Policy, not by Virtue and Courage. *Drusus*, it is said, reaped no small Glory from sowing Feuds among the *Germans*^t. *Corbulo's* Conduct is politically modelled^u. If he attacks, he attacks *Dolo*^w. *Suetonius Paulinus* is *militaris rei callidus*^x. *Cecina*, *Spurinna*, *Valens*, and *Titus Vinius*, are all Politicians. *Quadratus* and his Officers, in Council about the Death of *Mithridates*, whether it should be revenged, and his Kingdom recovered out of the Murderers Hands, shew themselves expert Politicians. *Paucis*, says the Annalist, *Decus publicum curæ, Plures tuta differunt. OMNE NEFAS EXTERNUM CUM LÆTITIA HABENDUM, SEMINA ETIAM ODIIORUM ꝑ FACIENDA*.—*Potiretur Rbadamistus male partis, dum invisus, infamis; quando id magis ex usu quam si eum gloria adeptus foret*^y.

Upon other Occasions, you find the Generals in *Tacitus*, notwithstanding their Wis-

^t Ann. 2. 62.

^u *Ibid.* 14. 23.

^w *Ibid.* 11. 19.

^x Hist. 2. 31.

^y Ann. 12. 48.

dom,

dom, distracted with Variety of Views, and uncertain what Measures to pursue, from the Number which the Writers Imagination supplies them with.

Nay, the Legions sometimes talk as proverbially, and act as craftily as their Generals^z.

Part of the Horse, in the Army that attacked Rome in Favour of *Vespasian*, were those who had been of *Vitellius's* Party, and had surrendered to *Vespasian* at *Narnia*. These were thought, according to our Author, not hearty in the Engagement,—as warily watching for what Side Fortune would ultimately declare^a.

Now this seems too refined and designing for particular Men in a general Attack upon an Enemy, to expect from that Enemy a Distinction of Favour from pleaded Treachery to the Party they had espoused, or pretended Affection to the Party they had deserted.

But even Barbarian Troops are so cunning and politic, as to betray and desert at the very Article of Time of most Consequence, as bidding fairest for higher Merit and greater Reward^b.

^z Hist. 1. 62.—2. 28.—4. 24.

^a *Ibid.* 3. 79.

^b *Ibid.* 4. 18.

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The Attack of the Capitol by *Vitellius's* Troops, was begun and carried on with Rage: The Soldiers are described *furens miles, nullo duce, sibi quisque auctor*: And *Vitellius* complains, that their Impetuosity was beyond Bounds and Restraint^c: Yet these same mad Troops *neque astu — indigebant*^d.

The Citizens as well as Soldiers, reason and distinguish, and are frequently as sagacious as *Tacitus* himself could be in giving Reasons for both Sides of a Question^e.

The Passions, which are the most natural and undisguised Part of the human Conduct, are in our Author laid under Rules: And this too in Characters, where Hypocrisy cannot well be suspected.

Octavia, though raw in Years, and present at her Brother's being poisoned, is represented as hiding under Diffimulation her Grief and Tendernefs, and every other Affection of her Soul^f. So deep a Diffimulation in the female Sex, and in these tender Years, had better become a Privy-Counsellor, old and experienced in the Mysteries of Court-Villainy. *Burrhus* himself, when he saw his Royal Master mount

^c Hist. 3. 70, 71.

^d *Ibid.* 3. 73.

^e Ann. 13. 7.

^f *Ibid.* 13. 16.

the Stage, and turn Songster, acted not a more courtly Part. *Aderat mærens Burrus ac laudans*^s.

When the Daughter of *Sejanus* is dragged to Execution, though no Politician indeed, yet she shews a Judgment and rational Discernment of the Impropriety of her Punishment, which is by no Means childish, but rather makes the Writer appear so: She cries, *se posse puerili verberere moneri*^h.

Perfes's Children, as I think it is related in *Livy*, when led in Triumph through the Streets of *Rome*, moved the greater Pity as they were insensible of the Greatness of their Misery.

When *Joseph* was stripped of his Coat, and under Expectation of Death from his Brothers, you have none of his Lamentations, Tears, or Deprecations, for a milder Fate more suited to his Years; tho', in another Part of his Story, upon the most natural Occasion, we are acquainted with his "Intreaties to his Brethren, and the Anguish of his Soulⁱ."

The Son of *Julius Mansuetus*, having ignorantly slain his Father, fighting under different Banners, upon the Discovery of his Deed, supplicates the Manes of his Father "to be

^s Ann. 14. 15.

^h *Ibid.* 5. 9.

ⁱ Gen. 42. 21.
atoned

“ atoned, and not to hold him in Horror as
 “ a Parricide ;” adding, *Publicum id facinus: & unum militem quotam civilium armorum partem?* Upon which, *Acidalius*, one of our Author’s Annotators, observes, *Ut hæc verba suo loco sint nunquam credam: Non convenit stomachatio ista lamentanti & lacramanti filio:* And so by a bold Transposition, and without the least Authority, he alters the Text, and puts this Reflection into the Mouths of the Soldiers.

The Commentator was misled by not duly considering the Manner and Character of his Author, intemperately fond of Moralizing and Politicks.

There is surely an evident Impropriety in putting so many Reflections, fine Thoughts, and wise Observations, in the Mouths of all, or most of his Speakers. The Observations are such as have been form’d by the wisest Statesmen and Philosophers, upon long Experience, and the deepest Insight into human Nature; by such who were great Masters of speculative Science, as well as vers’d in Action, acquainted with Books as well as with Men; of great acquired as well as natural Abilities, and conversant in the Schools, as well

as the Camp and Cabinet of Princes^k. But *Tacitus's* Speakers, one would imagine, were[†] all born Philosophers, Patriots, and Statesmen. Extempore, and upon ordinary Occasions, they moralize, reason, distinguish, debate, and conclude with all the Penetration and Wisdom of Sages grown grey in Science, and worn out in Business.

Our Author (to his Honour it must be owned) had large Materials, which made him so lavish of them. This appears further from the numberless Reasons of State which he produces for every Measure taken, or not taken. He sometimes advances such pregnant Arguments on both Sides of a Question, that the Reader is in suspense which Side to approve, till the Event justifies the Measure; though our Author's Ill-nature generally inclines him rather to censure, than approve. Lord *Clarendon*, as I remember, somewhere relating the different Methods of Proceeding proposed in the Prosecution of the same Affair, pronounces both good: But let our

^k Many of the Maxims and Observations are confirmed by parallel Passages, produced by the Editors and Commentators on *Tacitus*, from *Demosthenes*, *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Thucydides*, *Polybius*, &c.

Author take either Side of a Question, he will find abundant Reasons against it; and not unfrequently condemns both Sides as wrong. The same Degree of Guilt he can find Arguments at different Times to excuse or aggravate. Such is the Fruitfulness of his Invention, and the Redundancy of his Wit, that he can defend the worst Measures, or discredit the best. A Man, formed upon *Tacitus's* Principles, would scarce know how to act or speak; and would see so many Reasons and Dangers on all Sides, as to think it safest not to act at all. Our Author seems frequently to throw Objections in the Way of some Action to be performed, or Measure to be pursued, or Law to be enacted, that he may display his Eloquence and Penetration on the Side of the Question that is to pass.

Tacitus not only reasons too much; but his Reflections seem faulty, in being sometimes not just; sometimes too general.

You have sometimes big Words, without a Proportion of Sense or Sublimity: What has the Appearance of a Proverb ends in a Sophism; has more Sound than Solidity. He can give any Sentiment or Reflection the Turn of an Apothegm; but upon Examination,

tion, you'll sometimes find more Wit and Smartness than true sterling Sense; more of the Epigram and Repartee, than Energy and Strength.

Again, from particular Actions *Tacitus* readily deduces general Rules and Maxims; and sometimes seems to wrest an Action, in order to introduce some political or moral Observation, which otherwise could have had no Place.

Thus the Horror and Misery of *Tiberius*, express'd in his Letters to the Senate, are far from being agreeable to his usual Conduct and Diffimulation; and seem here inserted to introduce our Author's fine Remark upon the Misery of guilty Tyrants, borrowed from *Plato*.

Tacitus's Reflections are like his Descriptions: Such as you may, and are naturally apt to apply to other Occasions than those the Historian is upon. What he says of particular Persons, and on special Occurrences, may frequently, by altering the Tense or Time of the Verb, be formed into general Proverbs¹, equally applicable to other Per-

¹. What is here censured as a Fault is by *Lipsius* esteemed an Excellency in *Tacitus*. *Singulæ paginæ, quid Paginæ? Singulæ Lineæ Dogmata, Consilia, Monita sunt.* Lips. Allocutio iterat. & noviss.

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sons, other Times, and other Occasions. Thus the Speech of *Cerialis*, (though he professes himself unexercised in Speaking) is a Series of Maxims, and political Truths, applicable to all policied States and subject Provinces in the World. Almost every Sentence may be an useful Lesson to Governors, or the Governed ^m.

Our Author is for ever prescribing, if but a Symptom of Sicknefs appears in the Body Politick; and prescribing, as if the Distemper was at its full Height. He lets slip no Occasion to descant and moralize. His Writings are more properly a Description of human Passions, their Nature and Effects, than a particular History of Men and Things. Very little in *Tacitus* comes under the Character of pure History. 'Tis Conjecture, Reflection, Dissertation, Debate, Eloquence, Politicks, Proverbs, Antiquity, Affectation, Satyr, Sneer, Sarcasm, and any Thing but Matter of Fact.

Tacitus rather tells you what Men should do, or do in general act in such and such Circumstances, than confines himself to particular Facts as they really were done. You

have more of Criticism and Comment upon Actions, than an historical Narration of them. The History of Fact is the least valuable Part of the Writings of *Tacitus*, and the least considerable. He chiefly dwells on the Motives and Views upon which any Thing was done, or supposed to be done; seems to delight in blackening the Actor by some invidious Comment of false Steps in the entering upon it, Overights in the Prosecution, or bad Consequences attending it.

When you expect to know what such a General is doing, our Author will rather tell you what he should have done:— What such a General said; you have what he thought.— How far he contributed to the public Security or Honour of the Empire; you have his private Views, and low ambitious Ends.

And herein I cannot but think our Author greatly blameable, as a Writer of Annals and History, for assigning Causes and Motives of Action, which he must infallibly have been often a Stranger to; and for that general Spirit of Knavery and Artifice, which, were we to judge from his Actors, seem necessary for the carrying on of Business, and to be the very Life and Soul of Policy.

The Motives of Action are often unknown to Persons living at the very Time of their Performance, and intimately acquainted, as they before imagined, with the most intricate Intrigues of Stateⁿ. Yet there are few Actions in *Tacitus*, though remote from his own Times, and upon a Stage far distant from *Rome*, but what are perfectly intelligible to him, with all their Motives, as if he had been Privy-Counsellor and General on all Sides.

Many of the Speeches recorded, if any such were ever made, were very likely in private, and therefore difficult to be handed down to Posterity with such Exactness as we find them in our Author.

He knows, or pretends to know, the very Heart and Soul of Man; or rather gives the Thoughts such a political Turn and Sentiment, as was most agreeable to his own Genius, speculating at large upon Men and Things.

And herein he seems to act, if not a very injurious, yet a very unhappy Part. His Actors, we before observed, are most, or all of them Politicians; but surely the most infamous

ⁿ. See Memoirs de Retz.

Craftsmen that ever deserved the Character: A double Part is the general Practice; and common Honesty and plain Dealing the greatest Prodigies in *Tacitus*°.

From our Author's Story, and his Manner of treating it, an unexperienced Man would indeed suspect, that Honesty was a dangerous, at least an unnecessary Quality in Business, and most of all so in Courts; and that to be innocent is the Way to be undone: That next to being a Traitor, the surest Way to Preservation is to be cunning enough not to be betrayed. Unguarded Innocence, and undesigning Loyalty to your Prince, proves your certain Ruin. One would imagine, that there is no such Thing as carrying on Business in the plain Way of Truth: That Refinement, Craft, and Artifice are the best, or only Expedients.

Believe our Author's Actors, and form yourself to the World upon their Principles and Conduct, an honest Man would sooner die, than live by such a System. Turn Traitor, or you are betrayed. There is no Faith among Men: (For so one might believe from

• *Vipsanius Misella*, qui SOLUS ad id Bellum bonas Artes retulit. *Hist.* 3. 9.

the general Infidelity that prevails in *Tacitus* amongst Persons united by the most sacred Ties.) Distinguished Honours must be declined, for Fear of the Envy attending them. Friendships must be avoided for Fear of being betrayed by them: Innocence must be dissembled for Fear of being undone by it: High Blood, Popularity, distinguished Parts, or a distinguished Person, are all dangerous and pernicious: Diffimulation must be practised with Dissemblers: You must pursue with the same Artifice with which you are pursued: The best Security against the Snares of the Guilty is Use and Experience in Guilt: Encourage to Villainy, and then betray the Villain you have made: Simple Treachery is but an ordinary Crime: To desert after Desertion, and after turning Traitor to betray: — These are Specimens of that peculiar Perfection of Villainy described in *Tacitus*.

To one unacquainted with the World and its Ways, that Refinement, Artifice, and Diffimulation, which make a Part of almost every Character in *Tacitus*, have the Air of Craft and Knavery; and a plain Man would have as little Opinion of the Honesty, as he would have Hopes of the Success of such a hollow

hollow Conduct. Yet our Author's Fame and Credit in the World have chiefly arose from his Politicks, in which this Craft and Diffimulation have so large a Share.

Of the same Order with our Author in the Rank of Historians, with Respect to this political Finesse, is the *Cardinal de Retz*; with this Difference, that the Cardinal is himself professedly prime Politician; whereas the Policy of *Tacitus* is distributed to different Characters: Himself not having Opportunity to display his favourite Talent in such a busy Scene as the Cardinal was engaged in.

Such Authors may have their Use at some Times, and upon some Occasions; but there should seem no surer Proof of private Degeneracy and public Misery, than such Authors and such Politicks being in Fashion. They may have their Use in Times, when selfish Views usurp the Place of public Cares, and Court-Intrigues are more attended to, than national Councils: — When the Statesman's Schemes are to improve his own, and not a Nation's Welfare; to make his Master easy, not great or good: — To sooth the Foibles of the Weak, or gratify the Passions of the Wicked, rather than adopt the Schemes,
or

or employ the Virtues of the Wise. — They may have their Merit in Times, when low and personal Views are the Engines that move, or (which is as often the Case) obstruct the Wheels of Government: — When to make or unmake a Minister, to play Knave against Knave, and Knave upon Fool: To raise and support, or to defeat and take off a Faction: — To rise to Greatness without Goodness, to gain Power without Virtue, and carry on Policy without Honesty: — When this is the Fashion, and Curse of the Times, *Tacitus* and the Cardinal are excellent Masters to discipline young Pupils, and silence scrupulous Consciences. They are indeed most fit for Times of Misery and Faction, Confusion and Corruption: — For Times, when true Wisdom is useless, Virtue odious, and Honesty dangerous: — For Times, when Heaven in Vengeance visits a guilty Nation, sends a Spirit of Delusion among a faithless People, and permits the Nature of Things to take their Course; a Decay of Morals to succeed to the Neglect of Religion: Want of Sense to attend the Want of Morals: And Craft and Corruption to succeed to the Want
of

of Wisdom and Integrity ; and Disappointment and Misery to close the Scene.

There should not seem a greater Proof of the Corruption of human Nature, than that the Experience of near six Thousand Years, should not have taught Mankind that important Truth, “ That national Virtue is the “ Parent of national Happiness.” The political, as well as the natural Body, by a providential Constitution of Things, has Symptoms and Degrees of Health and Sicknes, a stronger or a feebler Pulse, according to the original Principles of which it is composed, and the future Care employed to preserve it from Decay within, or Violence from without: And Kingdoms, as well as Men, may, by a Debauch, accelerate the fatal Period assign’d them by GOD and Nature: But a Nation, without Virtue, can no more subsist for any Time, than a Body without proper Nourishment. Unnatural Principles and artificial Methods, like Physic to an effete, but once florid Constitution, may, for a while, keep the tottering Fabrick from Ruin ; but it must at last dwindle away of itself ; or, which is sometimes the Case, fall a Sacrifice to the first powerful Invader: As a distemper’d Body,

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dy, tho' gradually decaying, is often hurried off the Stage by some acute Disorder. It was in Consequence of national Wickedness, that Conquest pass'd successively from the *Jews* to the *Babylonians*, *Medes*, *Persians*, *Greeks*, and *Romans* : As an Inheritance from the de-funct Father to the surviving Son.

But to return to our Authors, if we may seem to have digress'd: Should we suppose them fraught with true Wisdom, and fitted for all Times and all Occasions, they cannot from thence challenge the Character of just Historians. The Province of History is not professedly to teach Politicks. The Truth of Fact and just Composition, the Product of an elevated Genius and an honest Heart, must conspire to form the finish'd Historian. How far *Tacitus* falls short of this Character may appear from these Observations : And as for the Cardinal, I cannot suppose he ever intended his Memoirs for a regular History. In his Characters, he brings in selfish Passions and personal Endowments, which have no Connection with the Public. His own Amours, private Intrigues, and whimsical Adventures, had been equally impertinent in a Work intended to promote Virtue, to instruct Mankind, to
inform

inform Princes, and teach Senators Wisdom. The Principles of Honour he acts upon, and recommends, have sometimes no Foundation in Honesty: As his Politicks have frequently no Relation to the common Good. True Greatness he makes to consist in being the Head of a Party. In Morals he was a Profligate, and shews excessive Vanity in boasting of his Crimes, which he plainly valued himself for as an Actor, tho' he affects to disavow them as a Writer. His chief Virtue is, that he was no Hypocrite: Tho' even his Vanity in boasting of his Vices and Passions, takes off from that better Esteem we should have had for a sincere Confession of, and Sorrow for them: But this, in his profligate Way, he would have called a Hotch-Potch of Devotion and Sins. Such a Writer as *Livy*, upon the Comparison, you would call a good Christian: The Cardinal a bad Heathen: Not so much as a Philosopher, or if a Philosopher, an Epicurean, or worse. Yet it must be owned, he had a ready Wit, a bright and piercing Genius, and a prodigious Insight into Men and Passions, which he seemed to have studied more than Right and Wrong: As the Interest of his Party, and the Gratification

cation of his Passions, seem to have been more his View, than the Good of his King and Country. He has, in short, neither Order, nor Dignity, nor Sobriety, nor Eloquence to persuade, nor Virtue to improve, nor Goodness to charm his Reader: — Is a graceless Wit: An unsanctified Church-man: More than *Italian* in Politicks: More than *Frenchman* in Vanity: And a very *Barbarian* in the Love of his Country.

As for his Politicks, which, with Respect to their Tendency and Use, have brought him under the same Censure with *Tacitus*, they were really his Practice; the Effect of that Necessity, and those Streights, into which Ambition and Faction had brought him; and are not improperly introduced in his Memoirs, so far as they made Part of the History of Fact, and gave Rise to, or were the Result of his Reflections upon the Commotions of the Times. *Tacitus's* Politicks had a more imaginary Existence: Such sanguinary Tyrants, such unreflecting Debauchees as our Author characterizes, seem to have had as little Occasion, as Temper and Disposition, to practise a speculative Policy, and carry on arbitrary Power, by artificial Counsels and dissembled Measures.

Measures. This the ingenious Writer before quoted observes^p: And as truly adds, “ That
“ *Tacitus* every where characterizes himself,
“ and his own Genius, and not the Persons
“ whose Actions he describes.”

^p. See Reflections on Antient and Modern History,
p. 22, 23.



C H A P.

C H A P. VII.

IF the Policy of our Author was not real, yet the Wickedness described, it may be said in his Defence, was.

It must be confessed, that many of his Characters were really and eminently bad, and which gave Room for much Censure and Satyr: And that his Subject was a miserable one, which in Part accounts for that Uneasiness and Pain with which we peruse *Tacitus*. His Story, as well as his Manner of treating it, is ungrateful and odious: You read many a Page in *Tacitus*, without finding any Traces of Virtue or public Spirit; without one bright Example, or illustrious Action. You are more frequently entertained with Scenes of Adultery and Murder, Debauchery, Oppression, enormous Prodigality, brutal Luxury, unnatural Cruelty, and unnatural Lust; intermixed with the supposed Practice of Astrology and Charms, Potions and Witchcraft, infernal Arts, Mysteries of Magic, and new Modes of Prostitution. The Stage is besides crowded with Informers, Pimps, and Parasites. All which makes the Reading of
Tacitus

Tacitus an unpleasant Task to a virtuous Spirit. The *Levites*, we are told by sacred Writ, who had seen the first Temple, when they saw the Foundation of the Second laid, wept with a loud Voice^a. Thus the Degeneracy of the *Roman* People, the Adulation and Sycophancy of the Senate, with the enormous Cruelty of the Emperors, make us equally curse the Tyrant and his Flatterers, and with bleeding Hearts call to Remembrance the Glory, the Virtues, and Liberties of old *Rome*.

Man finds and feels a Happiness in seeing other Men happy, and consequently an equal Degree of Uneasiness in beholding other Men miserable. In reading *Tacitus*, we are deprived of that Sympathy with the Happiness of our Fellow-Creatures, which is so agreeable to the human Soul: We are led to think meanly of the Dignity of human Nature, which we see so sadly abused and brutaliz'd: We feel not that Complacency in Virtue, which seems but to appear, in order to be distressed. We want that Satisfaction which a Mind ambitious to excell, and fond of true Glory, feels in

^a *Ezra* 3. 12.

contemplating the Excellencies of others. It is difficult to read *Tacitus*, and not be out of Humour; which I ascribe to the Prevalency of abominable Wickedness there described, and the perpetual Sufferings of innocent Persons; while not a *Roman* Soul appears to check the enormous Tyrant:— No signal Vengeance from Heaven, to overtake his Crimes, and free the labouring World.

A Reader that comes to *Tacitus* with little Religion would lose it : If he brings with him Doubts concerning Providence, he will find them not removed, but confirmed. A minute Philosopher runs the Hazard, by studying this Writer, to commence a settled Infidel. But a virtuous Soul feels Agony and Distress in the Perusal. A Scene of Misrule and Confusion, the Nature of Things perverted, Virtue oppressed, Villainy triumphant, Politicks without Honesty, Nobles without Honour, Women without Modesty, Senators Slaves; and Slaves Prime Ministers: Men sacrificed for their Dreams, executed for their Thoughts; Honours and Rewards the Prize of Infamy; and Infamy and Death the Reward of Merit and Truth:— All these sadly affect a virtuous
Mind

Mind, trained up to the Ideas of Order, Beauty, Happiness and Providence.

His Subject was indeed bad ; but still his Manner of treating it makes it worse. It is not enough that Misery is the Lot of Innocence ; but the Gods, where he is pleased to admit them, are either indifferent Spectators of human Massacres, or must act the Part of Executioners^r ; and be represented like *Milton's Moloch*.

—— *besmear'd with Blood*
Of human Sacrifice and Parents Tears.

Tho' quite Ignorant of the true System of Nature, he is fond of any Occasion to philosophize, and give us his quaint Observations of Fate, with all the visionary Nonsense of the latter Astrologers. After all the Effusion of human Blood, and the Sufferings of virtuous Patriots, which he describes, what wretched Comfort is it, to send us to invincible Necessity, Chance, and the Influence of the Stars, for the Clue to unravel these Difficulties in the Moral World^r ?

^r Ann. 13, 41. — 14, 12. — 16, 33.

^r Ann. 6. 22.

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As the Display of lawless Tyranny by *Tacitus* should excite in every *Englishman* a Love for, and an honest Zeal to preserve, that Liberty and Constitution by which his Life and Property are secured from the bloody and devouring Hands of imperial Villains and their Instruments: So should the Philosophy of this blind Wit; and the Misery of Man without a God in the World, improve our Esteem for the Light of Divine Revelation, and the sacred Writings in which it is convey'd to us. 'Tis a Pleasure of a different Kind we perceive in reading the *Scriptures*, to what we feel in perusing any other History: — A Pleasure more sublime and interesting. The History of Providence and a Moral Administration, which is intermix'd with, and indeed makes the chief Part of, the sacred Story, raises us to consider ourselves in a happier and nobler Situation than any mortal Circumstances or human Glory could place us. The Presence of the Deity, which we have the strongest Sense of while the Bible is our Study, makes us look upon ourselves in a true Light, as something more than Mortal, of an higher Order of Beings, under more equitable Laws, and a juster Administration,

tion, than human Policy can plan, and intended for a more extensive Duration than Mortality allows. All domestic, civil, and temporary Relations, are swallowed up in that greatest of all others — of Creatures and Children of their Father and G O D.

In prophane History, but particularly in the Writings of *Tacitus*, Man appears a lonely, independent Being ; independent, I mean, of all Assistance from above, and detach'd from the Care of Providence. He is to stand or fall by his own Measures, and takes his Chance in the Revolutions of the World, like other natural Bodies. He is indeed connected with Society, and as such, bids fair to have his Share in the Blessings or Calamities of his State and Nation. But Society itself, upon the Heathen System (especially in distressful Times, and impious, unbelieving Ages, such as our Annalist describes) was but a poor Security for the Happiness of Individuals. Blessings thus conveyed, were but precariously and half enjoyed, and could not with any Certainty be entail'd ; while Misfortunes had a double Sting ; were bitter to the present Sense, and Melancholy to the future Prospect.

How dismal is a World without a God!
How wretched Society without Religion!
This I think appears most plainly from our
Author, and the State of Things, which is
the Subject of his Writings. The Deductions
of Reason, and all the speculative Arguments
in the World in Defence of Religion as ne-
cessary to the Support of Society, are needless
to him that will consider the Misery of the
Times our Author describes, and withal re-
members, that Religion; both with Respect
to Belief and Practice, was at this Period
out of Fashion at *Rome*. What Wonder
then, that good Faith and Morals were also
fled: That there was no longer found any
Obligation in Oaths, any Allegiance to Princes,
any Obedience to Laws, any Honesty in pri-
vate Life, or virtuous Emulation in Public:
But all a Scene of Misery and Misrule: The
Public and the Private directed as Interest,
and Power, or Pleasure prompted: No Man's
Life or Property under any Security: Empe-
rors betrayed amidst their Guards; the Re-
public forgot amidst Citizens; *Roman* Glory
unknown in its Armies; Fidelity lost among
Friends; in short, no Head, no Heart, no
Activity,

Activity, or Wisdom, but to promote selfish Ends and infamous Projects?

Nothing but a God admitted on the Stage a Spectator, and Judge of human Action, can give Activity to the best, or be a sufficient Restraint upon the worst of Men. G O D is the Life of the Moral, as well as the Natural World. His Authority alone can exact at the Hands of every Man the conscientious Discharge of his proper Duty; can *bind Kings in Chains*; subdue the strongest, overawe the boldest, and restrain the most licentious,

Or let Society and Order dissolve, and give Way to lawless Tyranny, or the Madness of the People, the Religious System still affords a happy Retreat to the pious Votary. In the Contemplation of an All-good and All-powerful G O D, the human Heart finds endless Matter of Joy and Comfort. The Belief of a Providence that conducts us thro' Life, and in Misery and Death forsakes us not, gives a more rational Satisfaction than the most illustrious Fame or extended Fortune.

C H A P. VIII.

WE have thus considered the principal Qualities of *Tacitus* as a Writer and an Historian; and cannot help thinking, that there is a false Sublime and Affectation in his Description: A Scurrility and satyrical Vein, with two epigrammatical a Conciseness in his Wit; an Acuteness, but too speculative, and a Policy over-refined in his Observations; a malignant and ill-natur'd Turn in his Characters; a Philosophy too abstracted and elevated in his Reasoners, and a Vanity in his Learning: In short, that he is in Antiquity a Pedant; in the Philosophy of Nature a Sceptic; in Morals loose; in Description gaudy and pompous; in Politicks subdolous, refined and knavish.

He paints more like a Poet than an Historian. He is still more an Orator than a Poet; more a Moralist and a Wit than an Orator; and a Politician more than all.

He is ambitious, but not stately; studies to say great Things, rather than true; and would make his Piece glare with fine Colours,

lours, rather than natural; or, if he aims at the natural, he so overcharges and encumbers it with Art, that you are more shocked than pleased; and are most at a Loss to find Nature, in his greatest Endeavours to shew it. He frequently strikes and surprizes, but rarely moves you in a natural Way; I mean, he strikes the Fancy, but reaches not the Heart; if you are moved, it is generally with his Wit, more than his Story.

And here it must be owned, that he has a very fine Wit; and his Expression is frequently very happily adapted to his Sentiment. Sometimes indeed his Sense is so crowded in the Narrowness and Sententiousness of the Language, that his Commentators will spend twenty Lines in explaining one of the Authors: And it may be observed, that Mr. *Gordon* is often obliged to paraphrase rather than translate. He had no other Way of doing his Author Justice, and giving his full Sense. Sometimes you have fine Thoughts and beautiful Sentiments poured so thick upon you, that you are surprized, and almost bewildered. This is particularly observable in the Beginning of his History; where he writes with a nobler Spirit, greater Dignity, a more
natural

natural Air, and a happier Turn; or, it may be, the Subject has a different Effect upon the Writer as well as the Reader. Satiated with Blood and Misery, we with Pleasure relish the Scene changed; or, as a different Fortune, Age, and Circumstances have a proportionable Effect upon the Writer's Mind, the Historian might be now advanced in Years, in Fortune and Honours. Hence his Style might be more elevated, his Soul more serene, and his Composition more flowing, just and regular.

His Wit is generally striking, deep and piercing; cutting and pointed; and sometimes really sublime as Wit can be; for Wit strikes the Fancy, the true sublime the Soul. An Epigram which *Tacitus* often affects, is incapable of Sublimity. Sometimes his Wit is bold and rash, and spares neither Gods nor Men. Sometimes it has a peculiar Delicacy, as his Satyr has a most keen Poignancy.

His Reflections are often more refined than natural; shining rather than solid; and more surprizing than just; at the same Time, it must be confessed, that they are sometimes all these together: And nothing has spoiled them, but the improper Application to Persons and Things.

Things. His immense Fund of excellent Sense, is only marr'd by his too great Affectation of shewing it upon all Occasions. This it is that puts him so frequently upon debating both Sides of a Question on a Subject, which is often determined in private, in Ages and Countries far remote: This it is that puts him upon the proverbial and sententious Observations, which you frequently meet with on the most common Occasions, and ascribed to very vulgar Characters: Hence that abstracted, cool and philosophical Air, which his most passionate Actors and Speakers often assume. He was himself a Wit, philosophical, and an accurate Inspector into human Nature: Hence that Wit, Philosophy, and sage Observation of Men and Manners with which his Writings abound. It may seem a Paradox, but is incontestable Truth, that at the same Time he shews himself a Man of very deep Sense, he has shewn great Want of it; and where he is most excellent, he is often most faulty. His Vanity gets the better of his Understanding, and if this could dictate bright Thoughts and wise Reflections, that would not let him see the Propriety of Time and Character, to which his fine Sentiments
and

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and Observations were applicable ; or, supposing such an inconsistent Conduct cannot be ascribed to the same Person, it must be allowed (which is sometimes the Case) that he did foolishly with his Eyes open ; imagining that the Brightness and Refinement of his Observations might dazzle the Eyes of his Readers, so as not to let them see the Impropriety of their Application (in which he has succeeded with many of his Admirers) or, resolv'd to establish his Fame as a great Wit, tho' at the Expence of his Character as a just Writer.

Let us consider this Temper of Vanity when join'd with Malice, and observe how it shews itself in common Life, in Persons, in other Respects, of good Sense and confess'd Abilities.

- + The Aim of a vain Man is to gain Applause: This appears so plain, that it often defeats the End propos'd. When a vain Man talks, 'tis not so much to inform you, as to distinguish himself: Hence whatever is the Subject, he will so manage and adapt it, as to affect, (as he thinks) to surprize, to move, and strike his Hearers in an uncommon Way. His good Sense (which is supposed)
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furnishes him with Materials for any general Description, which he can dress up in the greatest Pomp ; and at the same Time will add some particular Circumstance to distinguish it from other general Accidents and Occurrences of the same Kind, which it may be suppos'd every Body else is acquainted with. And this makes him fonder of the Miraculous, than to dwell on the settled Course of Nature.

Thus too his Observations he lays down as the wisest, and such as he supposes you before ignorant of. General Maxims upon common Occasions he has by Rote : But his own have a Refinement peculiar to themselves, and which are to keep him aloof from the Vulgar. This makes him frequently fonder of the Exception than the Rule ; tho' whatever he asserts must pass for a Position, and an Axiom indisputable.

As his Aim is Applause, he cannot bear with Temper what is advanced by others, lest he should seem inform'd by them : Or if you assert an acknowledg'd and uncontroverted Truth, he will tell you, it is old and obsolete ; every Body knows it. The same Question he will affirm, or oppose in different
Com-

Companies, to shew his superior Talents; and he finds abundant Reasons, or the Semblance of Reasons, to defend any Thing he advances, and to contradict and support his Opposition to any Thing said or done by another.

As he thus disputes or blames the wisest Reasonings or Sentiments of others, to set off his own superior Wisdom; so he directly or obliquely detracts from their moral Excellencies, to display his own superior Virtue. This renders his Conversation distasteful, being full of Satyr and Malignity; and gives his Countenance an Air of Asperity and Malevolence. He wears the Brow of a Critic or an Inquisitor; or if he smiles, 'tis in Disdain and Contempt: His Eye curses you; he seems to hate all Mankind; he will rarely commend any Man, lest his own Merit should be lessen'd by the Competition: Or, if he commends, 'tis either something in a low Character, which undoubtely sets his own upon the Comparison in a fuller Light; or, 'tis personal Qualities or natural Endowments, where what we call Merit is not imputable; or, 'tis with some Exception, or to smoothe the Way to some greater Scandal. But in general,

neral, our vain Man allows little Virtue or Merit, but will detract from every Excellency of the Head or Heart conspicuous and distinguish'd, in other Men. Mention *Warburton's* great Parts and extensive Learning, he will tell you, and without a Blush, that he has neither Genius nor Judgment, and knows nothing of Literature or Antiquity. *Lock!* — A mere Plagiary, who is indebted to the Schoolmen for every Thing that is valuable in his *Essay*. *Harvey* — was but the Publisher of other Men's Discoveries; and *Tillotson* — died poor, because he had no Opportunity of growing rich.

Again observe a vain Man in Company; he[†] talks the most and hears the least: The slightest Hint sets him a going. He makes unnatural Connections, and takes every Opportunity to obtrude his own Observations, Travels, Learning, Fortune, or Family, or whatever is the Object of his Vanity. His Discourse from Beginning to End, is the Display of his own Wisdom and other Men's Folly, Antiquity, Politicks, Morals, News, — all made subservient to his grand Scheme, *viz.* to shew himself Master of deep Erudition, great Virtue, and refined Sense.

Let

Let him relate a Dispute, or personate the Language and Character of another, he will put into the Mouth of the personated Character better Sentiments and Language than such Person was Master of: He will make Objections and Answers in a fuller Light than the Parties concern'd can be suppos'd capable of doing; for he studies not so much to represent them, as himself; not so much to inform, as to move and affect you; to give you his own Sentiments, rather than the true ones.

After what has been already said of *Tacitus*, I need make no Application of these Remarks.

His whole Character would be best display'd by taking a Portion of some other more unaffected History (for Instance, the Story of *Joseph*, before quoted) and modelling it agreeable to his Manner^t. It may easily be conceived how this should be done, tho' none but a Writer of *Tacitus's* extraordinary Genius could execute it truly:

The Sarcasm of *Joseph's* Brethren, "*Behold this Dreamer cometh;*" must be of

^t Vid. *Strad.* L. 2. Prob. 2. Hist. Muret. Pars 1. Prob. fin.

a considerable Length, with a strong Mixture of Wit and Satyr upon both Father and Son.

Reuben's Advice to cast him into the Pit, must have some suspicious Circumstance annex'd to it : He is afraid of the Discovery if they Murder him ; or, he intends to support himself, and undermine his Brothers by *Joseph's* Interest ; or, has a Mind of the sole Profit in the Sale of him.

Joseph being stript of his Coat of many Colours, must be attended with bitter Lamentations, soft Entreaties, and an Appeal to their Reason, concerning the Impropriety of his Punishment : “ Why did they not whip
“ him as a Boy rather than murder him
“ as a manly Criminal.”

The Traffic of the *Ishmaelites* must be largely display'd, with the Nature of the Camels that bore, and of the Soil and Trees which produced their Spicery ; with whatever besides is extraordinary in the natural Productions, or civil Customs of their Country.

Jacob's Mourning for his Son must be aggravated by a Number of Circumstances, attended with a long Speech, wherein he must

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accuse

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accuse both Gods and Men ; and is at last with Difficulty restrain'd by his Sons and Daughters from killing himself.

Upon *Joseph's* Arrival in *Egypt*, must be related the Natural and Civil History of the Country, it's first Planting, antient Manners, antient Kings, very antient Gods, and the Revolutions of the State to the present Reign.

In the Civil History must be a great deal of Wisdom and refin'd Policy display'd : In the Natural, much of the miraculous ; in the Religious, much of the mysterious, with quaint Remarks and vain pedantic Explications.

Joseph's Youth and Beauty, Wit and Parts, must be described with much Elegance and Art ; particularly his Innocence, in Order to prepare him for the Sacrifice and unjust Suffering. The Adultress must have an Angel's Face, and every soft Endearment, to captivate the innocent Youth. Her Guilt must be charg'd upon the Husband, old and impotent : Her illustrious Ancestors, if famed for Guilt or Greatness, must be commemorated : She must be banish'd or put to Death, that
the

the King's or the Husband's Cruelty may be expos'd.

The Butler's and Baker's Imprisonment must be accounted for from some Court-Intrigue, or Suspicion of Conspiracy, or the Treachery of false Friends. Their Offices must be described with their original Institutions, and subsequent Regulations. The Criminal executed must be in a Rage, and scurrilous upon his Enemies: He must too be witty, and say something smart, or great; he must die to Fame, and the chief Butler must survive to Infamy.

The Phænomenon of Dreaming must be accounted for from some romantic Falsehoods, superstitious Ceremonies, magic Rites, and a visionary Philosophy.

Joseph's Advancement, and his first Appearance in his State Chariot, must give large Field for labour'd Description. The Glory and Wealth of *Egypt* must glitter upon this Occasion; their Officers and Armies must make a grand Parade, to compliment the new Minion. The Monarch, weak or wicked, must make a Speech full of great, and good, and wise Sentiments, upon the Advancement of his new Favourite; and presently after sink

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into a Cypher; while Noble and Ignoble bow the Knee to *Joseph*. Yet the Reflections of the People must be Satyrical and Sneering upon this Occasion: Tho' hungry, they must be witty; and tho' perishing, political. Every Soul of them must turn *Moral Philosophers* ^u.

^u See *Morg—n*, Vol. I. p. 239.



OBSER-



OBSERVATIONS

O N

TACITUS.

P A R T II.



Nother Way of judging of the Merit of our Author, will be by comparing him with another Historian of the same Nation. And this will be the more agreeable, as it affords us an Opportunity to applaud as well as censure,

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to admire at the same Time that we criticize.

A short Character of *Livy* is therefore subjoined; in drawing of which, a particular Regard has been had to the foregoing Observations on *Tacitus*.



C H A P.

C H A P. I.

LIVY goes not out of his Way to celebrate Places and Persons famed of old. And where the Occasion naturally leads him to it, he does it with the greatest Modesty and Brevity^a.

Nor does he upon any Occasion, with a serious Air, recite as Truths the Absurdities of Pagan Theology, or the Fables of Poets and Mythologists.

If there is a Place where he is faulty, it is in the Description of the *Mæander*, and the *Marsyas*, which falls into it; whence he takes Occasion to mention the famed Musician *Marsyas*, as here challenging the God *Apollo* to contend with him on the Flute^b. Yet an Admirer of *Livy* might say in his Excuse, that the Occasion of mentioning this antiquated Story was natural enough; as a *Roman* Consul was at this Time arrived upon the

^a *Ubi sinope dicitur Græca urbs fuisse. Vol. II. p. 249. Ed. Oxon. — Thebes campum carmine homeri celebratum. Lib. 37. 19. Nephelidæ promontorium — inclitum fœdere antiquo Atheniense. Lib. 33. 20—34. 28.*

^b *L. 38. 13.*

River *Mæander*. And the Affair of *Marfyas* he but just mentions; and mentions as founded on common Fame, without that Air of Seriousness and Importance by which *Tacitus* would engage our Attention to his romantic Digressions.

Where he seems to digress into the *Grecian* Story, he shews the Necessity of it, from the close Connection the *Grecian* Affairs had with the War, which the *Romans* waged with *Antiochus*^c.

Again, how properly does *Nicander*, Ambassador from the *Etolians* to *Philip*, in Order to rouse him to War, recall to the Memory of the *Macedonian* Monarch defeated, weakened, and abridged of his Power and Empire by the *Romans*, the ancient Deeds of the Kings of *Macedon*, and the World ravaged by the victorious Arms of this Nation^d.

Upon the Reduction of *Syracuse* by the *Roman* Army under *Marcellus*, the Historian naturally enough mentions the former For-

^c *Abstulerunt me velut de spatio res Græciæ immixtæ Romanis: Non quia ipsas operæ pretium est scribere, sed quia causæ fuerant cum Antiocho belli.* L. 35. 40.

^d L. 35. 12.

tune of this famed City. But let it be observed, that it is not to display his own Erudition, but the Humanity of the Conqueror. And how graceful and generous are the Tears of *Marcellus* upon this Occasion! From an Eminence he takes a View of the City, at this Time one of the most beautiful in the World:— The Scene of so many heroic Deeds;— where *Athens* lost her Navy; where *Nicias* and *Demosthenes* perished with their Armies: The Seal of so many potent Tyrants;— where *Hiero* the good and generous lately swayed: — He is transported with the Thought of his own good Fortune in making so noble a Conquest; but his Joy is interrupted by a generous and melancholy Reflection, that a Scene of so much Glory and Beauty must in a Moment be laid in Ashes; and he bursts into Tears, the Conqueror himself subdued by Pity, which does but heighten his Glory*.

Where the Historian chances (for it is but rare that he does it) to mention any foreign State, or Affairs not purely *Roman*; it is done with some natural Connection; the Digres-

* L. 25. 24.

sion is short, and the Return to his Subject immediate ^f.

The Digression concerning *Alexander the Great*; and the Author's Conjecture upon the Comparison of their mutual Strength, what would have been the Event of a War between him and the *Romans*, is scarce a Digression; as not only falling in with the Period of his History, but as connected also with the *Roman* Affairs, and explanatory of them.— Is just and beautiful; full of good Sense, Dignity and Eloquence;— is one of the most valuable Passages in *Livy*, and is marr'd by nothing (if it is at all marr'd) but by the Author's seeming Partiality to his native Soil.

Or, if it must be called a Digression, not strictly agreeable to the Laws of History, it must at the same Time be allowed an Ornament; if 'tis a Fault, 'tis also a Beauty; if

^f EO ANNO Alexandrum epiro regem IN ITALIAM classem appulisse constat: Quod bellum, si prima satis prospera fuissent — HAUD DUBIE AD ROMANOS PERVENISSET. Vol. II. p. 110. EADEM ÆTAS rerum Alexandri magni est, quem sorore hujus ortum, in alio tractu orbis invictum bellis juvenem fortuna morbo extinxit. CÆTERUM ROMANI, &c.

our Author has transgressed, yet he may glory in it: He needed not have made any Apology; he deserves Applause: — The Applause due to the Lover of his Country, the manly Reasoner, and the exalted Orator.

In the first Period of his History, I think *Livy* had an Eye to the Times in which he lived.

The 'plain Original, and simple Institution of some Offices and Games, is described in order to display the Enlargement of the Office, and the Extravagancy of the Diversion in After-times.

Thus the Original of Stage Plays is given, and their After-Improvements deduced; not to shew the Author's Erudition in Antiquity, but to expose the extravagant Expence of these Entertainments, arrived, in *Livy's* Time, from a pious and simple Beginning, to an Excess, by opulent Kingdoms scarce supportable.

With the same honest Zeal and Integrity he enlarges upon the primitive Discipline both in Peace and War; to expose the Degeneracy and Corruption of his own Times, and to shew his Countrymen wherein their true Greatness and real Liberty consisted.

Nay, it must be confessed, that during this first Period of his Story, his Reflections, or the Reflections of his Speakers, are sometimes perhaps too raised and magnificent for the Times and the Occasions; and a Reader, acquainted with the *Roman* Story, will think some of them more suited to the latter Civil Wars, than to the Disputes between the Tribunes of the People, and the Patricians. Thus, *Gloria belli penes hostes est*, is much more applicable to the Defeat of *Crassus* than to the Incurfions of the *Æqui* and *Volsci*^h. But such was *Livy's* Frame, or his Fault if you please, he could not but be eloquent, he could not but love his Country.

^h Vol. I. p. 202.

C H A P.

C H A P. II.

LIVY's Description is exact and clear, natural and affecting: You see and hear every Thing related by him. You are insensibly conveyed from the Camp to the Senate, from *Sicily* to *Carthage*: With *Annibal* you pass the *Alps* and *Appennine*, and cannot help being affected with the Description of the Region; so that in the very Dog-days the Reader shivers at the Horror of the Picture, and bleak Misery of the Climate.

Livy had, I question not, been upon the *Alps*; and has described them from what he personally knew of them; as he generally describes other Parts of *Italy*, like one particularly acquainted and familiar with every Mountain, Stream, Road and Prospect.

Thus too the State of the War in *Macedonia*, and the geographical Description of the Country, is related as by one who understood perfectly well the Narrowness of every Pass, the Height and Difficulty of every Mountain, the Course of every River, and the Situation of every Port and Garrison in *Greece*.

The

The Disposition of Armies, Supplies of Troops, Recruits raised, Distribution of the Provinces, Support of Allies, Creation of Magistrates, Ceremonies of Religion, the Historian orders with as much Regularity and Ease, as if he had both decreed and executed every Thing himself.

He draws up the Line of Battle, marshals the Troops, gives Orders and executes them, as if he was not an Historian of a distant Age, but a Spectator of what he describes; not a Writer, but an Actor; a Soldier and General on both Sides. The Reader is particularly referred to the Battles of *Thrasimene*, *Cannæ*, and *Trebia*.

In a March, a Retreat, or the Surprize of a City, you see every Step taken; and see it not as a cool By-stander, a Spectator; but cannot help imagining yourself a Party in the Action, and are affected with the Passions corresponding to the various Turns and Circumstances of Affairs.

The taking of *Tarentum* by *Annibal* is told with all the Exactness of one who had been an Eye-Witness, or a Party, in the Execution of this insidious Measure. In *Tacitus's* Description of a Battle or an Attack by Night,
all

all is Confusion and Darkneſs, mingled Havock and undiſtinguiſhed Carnage; the Writer is as confuſed as the Scene he deſcribes; and ſhews his Ignorance of all that was done by dwelling ſo much upon Generals in the Deſcription. In *Livy* (as in this Inſtance of the Surprize of *Tarentum*) you have Light in Darkneſs, and Order in Confuſion; the Particulars of the whole Affair being related with all the Clearneſs and Exactneſs that the moſt regular Action could admit. The Part of *Philomenus* here deſcribed is a juſt Example of one of *Livy's* Excellencies, or what Mr. *Addiſon* calls his ſpecific Qualities. You ſee him go forth with his Dogs and Hunting-Tackle; you ſee him return with his Game; you hear him call; the Watch answers; the Gate opens; — in ſhort, you ſee and hear, and are preſent, and engaged, and engage, in every Part of this Night's Expeditionⁱ.

Livy does not, as indeed he had no Occaſion, aggravate the Paſſions, or aggrandize the Actions he relates. Things ſpeak for themſelves. Tho' *Antiochus*, in the Battle

ⁱ Lib. 25. 9.

with *Scipio* the Consul, lost 4000 Horse and 50,000 Foot, you have not one Word of the Hugeness of the Battle. The Disposition of the Troops, and their Number, the Course of the Action, the Numbers slain, and Prisoners taken, tell us that it must be a great Action^k. But all *Tacitus's* magnificent Epithets, huge Preparations, Noise and Pomp of Description, cannot persuade us the same of his Skirmishes.

Upon the Slaughter of the two *Scipio's* in *Spain*, how short, yet beautiful, is the Description of the Sorrow which this Calamity occasioned at *Rome*, and in the Province? *Luctus ex morte eorum non Romæ major quam per totam Hispaniam fuit: Quin apud cives partem doloris & exercitus amissi & alienata provincia & publica trahabat clades, Hispaniæ ipsos lugebant, desiderabantque duces. Cnæum tamen magis, quod diutius præfuerat iis, priorque & famam occupaverat & specimen justitiæ temperantiæque Romanæ primus dederat*^l. How different is this from the tragical Extravagance, or rather the Ostenta-

^k Lib. 37. 44.

^l *Ibid.* 25. 36.

tion of Sorrow which we are entertained with in *Tacitus*, upon the Death of *Germanicus*?

The general Description of any signal Calamity in *Livy* is not made up of any boyish Particulars. Thus, tho' he professes not to be able to describe the Temper of Mind in the People of *Rome* upon the Report of the Defeat at *Cannæ*; yet in few Words, *en passant*, he paints the supposed miserable and ruined Condition of the Republic, in stronger Colours than *Tacitus* would have done by a long and laboured Detail of low Circumstances. He would have entertained us with particular Instances of Misery and Distress, when the Public was supposed lost; “ when
“ UNIVERSAL RUIN, says our Historian,
“ was the general Talk: Two Consuls, two
“ Armies cut off, the Republic had neither
“ Camp, General, nor Troops; and *Annibal*
“ was Master of *Italy*. It was *Fabius*'s
“ Advice, adds *Livy*, that the Women should
“ not appear in public, and each should be
“ obliged to keep their own Houses:— The
“ Lamentations of Families should be re-
“ strained, and Particulars wait at Home for
“ Tidings relating to their private Loss^m. ”

^m L. 22. 55.

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If you have Exactness and Particularity in *Livy*, it is with the utmost Propriety, as in *Scipio's* going on board, and his Voyage to *Africk*. The Importance of the Event makes every Circumstance considerable. The Action was the most momentous; and no less than the Empire of the World was the Prize of Conquestⁿ. Besides, the Time was not improper for such a Description: Peace was made with *Philip* in *Greece*, and *Annibal* remained unactive and motionless in *Italy*.

But upon most Occasions, *Livy's* Descriptions are remarkably short; and such as a Writer, who has no Regard but to Truth, would naturally give.

You'll have an Insurrection of Barbarians, a Battle ensuing, and a Defeat, all in five Lines; which in *Tacitus* would have taken up as many Chapters^o.

A Commotion of Shepherds and Slaves is mentioned, and but just so; as repressed, not by Generals and Armies, but by legal Prosecutions, and the Authority of Magistrates and Laws^p.

ⁿ L. 29. 26. ^o L. 41. 10. ^p Vol. 5. p. 198. 212.

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You have sometimes half a Dozen Towns taken in as many Lines, nay, in one Line^a. The Historian's Pen keeps Pace with the Rapidity of the Conqueror's Sword. He dwells not upon Trifles; but, like a prudent General, reserves his Strength for Actions of Moment, and Cities of Eminence and Power.

You have an Earthquake in less than three Lines, yet described with all the Sublimity the Subject naturally dictates. The Introduction of this short Description is still more beautiful and sublime than the Description itself. He was relating the Battle of *Thrasimene*, and the brave Efforts of the *Roman* Soldiers upon their desperate Situation: *Tantusque fuit ardor, adeo intentus pugnae animus, ut eum terrae motum (QUI MULTARUM URBIUM ITALIÆ MAGNAS PARTES PROSTRAVIT, AVERTITQUE CURSU RAPIDAMNES, MARE FLUMINIBUS INVEXIT, MONTES LAPSU INGENTI PRORUIT) nemo pugnantium senserit*^r.

It is observable, that the Description here is in a Parenthesis, and brought in with a secon-

^a Vol. V. p. 201.

^r Lib. 22. 5.

dary View. With the same Brevity he gives you a Tempest, a Fire, or Flood; and gives them as Things that fall in his Way, which he cannot avoid taking Notice of; and not like One, who seeks, or shews an Eagerness to catch at such Opportunities of displaying his Eloquence and Talent at Description^f.

In his Description of any uncommon Appearance in Nature, where the Miraculous has been admitted by ignorant Antiquity, he is not careful or studious to relate Absurdities, and to heap Fable upon Fable; but, where he can, confutes them^t.

Livy has a wonderful Faculty of describing not only Actions, but the different Passions that arise and correspond to the different Situation of the Affair that is transacting and related. He seems to have known every natural Movement of the human Heart; with the finest Hand, he touches the different Springs of Pity, Joy, or Love. Though we are charmed with the Diction, yet the Passion

^f vi. L. 30. 39.— 31. 45.— 33. 41.— 35. 21.
— 35. 40.— 38. 28. ^t See concerning the *Euripus*, L. 28. 6.

triumphs over this airy Pleasure, and the Colourings of Art are quite shadowed by the affecting Strokes of Nature.

After the Battle of *Cannæ*, when *Annibal* advances to *Rome* with his Army, the Reader, struck with Anxiety and Concern, as if the Fate of his native Country was depending, and imagining himself a Citizen of old *Rome*, is attentive to every Measure, alarmed at every Motion, reads Terror and Dismay in every Face; sees Prætors, Consuls, Dictators, and the Senate all intent and busied in their several Charges; views *Annibal*, at the Head of the his *Numidians*, advancing before the Gates, the Armies drawn out in Order of Battle; — and is all the while in the utmost Suspence for the momentous Event^u.

Again, we could scarce be more affected, were a foreign Army landed in *England*, than we are at *Asdrubal's* having passed the *Alps*, The March of *Nero*; his joining his Brother Consul; *Asdrubal's* Decampment; the Battle; the Intelligence received of it at *Rome*; — render us all Eye, all Ear. The Historian engages our Heart, as well as our Senses.

^u L. 26.

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Every Passion that could affect a *Roman*, is so described as to affect the Reader.

As in the natural World, we have observed, *Livy* is not fond of the Miraculous in his Description; so in the moral, he shocks you not with the Surprizing, the Extravagance of Passion, or sudden Change of Temper and Conduct, upon Reasons unaccountable, in the same Character. His Actions and Sentiments, I mean, those of his Actors or historical Persons, are exactly suited to their Characters. *Annibal* is the same from his first Appearance on the Stage of Action, till his last quitting of *Italy*; dreadful, even in his Retreat; and formidable, though flying; like a Lion chased and robbed of his Prey; indignant, breathing Vengeance, still formidable, and still a Lion.

All is natural and uniform in our Historian; and you are prepared for the Event from the preparatory Steps to any Action; as you may frequently guess at the future Conduct of any Character, which he had before given.

The Defection of *Capua* to *Annibal* was the natural Effect of their Manners and Depravity. Liberty and good Faith were Words that had lost their Credit and Esteem at *Capua*. Licentiousness and uninterrupted Indulgence
were

were all they required: But these, it was imagined, could not be supported by their Adherence to a distressed and vanquished People. But by calling in the Conqueror, they hoped to make their own Terms, and share in the Spoils of Conquest. The rest of their Conduct, to the Surrender of their City to the *Romans*, is uniform, and exactly answers the Character the Historian gave of them in the Beginning of the twenty-third Book. The last Speech of *Vibius Virius*, his Death with that of twenty-seven Senators, and the Manner of their Death, is the most in Character that can possibly be expressed^w.

^w L. 26. 13, 14.



C H A P. III.

THE Purity of *Livy's* Diction, and Elegance of his Composition, distinguish him as much from *Tacitus*, as the Justness of his Description.

Whatever may be said of the Purity of *Tacitus's* Latin, 'tis beyond Dispute, that he has several Expressions and Modes of Speech not frequently found in the Writers of the *Augustan* Age; several, I think, entirely unknown to them. 'Tis a true Character of his Style I have somewhere met with. *Stylus magis gravis quam elegans, asper enim — duriusculusque atque a Latinae linguae Candore discedens.*

His Editors and Commentators were plainly sensible, that his *Latin* was not always the purest; and so have arbitrarily in several Places corrected the Text: Substituting Words, and forming the Phrase more agreeable to the Standard of Classical Elegance, and the Purity of former Ages.

I may add, that his Græcisms, and Poetic Liberties occur more frequently than in any of the *Roman* Historians. *Ne armentis quidam
suus*

*suus honor aut gloria frontis** — wants little of the Measure, as it wants none of the Figures of heroic Poetry. For other Instances of this poetic Diction which abounds in *Tacitus*, the Reader is referr'd to the elegant and learned Critic *Strada*.^y

Obscurity is, I think, as chargeable upon *Tacitus*, as Want of Purity; and this latter is indeed frequently the Occasion of the former. His Obscurity is undeniable, from the different Opinions of Commentators upon the same Passage, where the Text is allow'd to be genuine, and from their Disputes about the genuine Reading, when different Words, conveying different Senses, are arbitrarily obtruded and defended, as giving the true Sense, which, it is plain, both Sides are often ignorant of.

'Tis pleasant enough to observe the Conduct of the Hyper-Criticks upon these Occasions. Several of the Annotators and Commentators upon *Tacitus* are allowed to be Scholars, and particularly eminent Masters in classical Learning; yet you find them complaining — *Locus obscurus & corruptus*: — *Turba-*

* De Morib. Germanor.

^y L. 2. Prob. 3. Hist.

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runt me verba: — Locus est obscuræ sententiæ, imo incertæ: — Mentem loci non penetro: — Obscura est sententia, &c.— Upon these Occasions up starts the Hyper-Critic, and tells you: *Non satis assequuntur vim sententiæ VIRI ALIOQUIN DOCTISSIMI.* This Compliment is paid to these dim-fighted Commentators, to display our Hyper-Critic's greater Sagacity; who by a Note of a Dozen Lines, shews you the Perspicuity and Beauty of the Passage in Question.

Other Writers, 'tis true, are liable to the same Objections from the different Sentiments of Commentators upon the same Passage; but few, I think, if any of the *Roman* Historians, in the same Degree with *Tacitus*. Let a Reader take *Livy* in Hand without Translation or Notes; if he is but a moderate Adept in the *Latin* Tongue, he will find little Difficulty in many Chapters together; except where some plodding Editor brings in an aukward Word to confound common Sense, and spoil a beautiful Antithesis. If he is a Proficient in the *Roman* Language, he will read a Book from End to End, with little Hesitation or Doubt concerning his Meaning in any Place: But a good Classical Scholar, who sits down to *Tacitus*, disdain-

ing

ing the Assistance of Commentary or Translator, will meet with Difficulties in every Book, and frequently in every Page.

What has render'd *Tacitus* obscure, besides the Want of Purity in his Style, is the Refinement of his Sentiments; which, like some Minims in Nature, require uncommon Sagacity and artificial Powers to assist you in the Knowledge of.

His Ignorance in some Cases, as in the Battles, Marches, Conduct of his Generals, as well as Armies, which he would describe, has, I think, greatly embarrass'd his Story.

There are besides, so many Particulars of Men and Things in carrying on, or the Relation of a general Action; for Instance, the War between *Vitellius* and *Vespasian*, as much obscure the Narration. You lose Sight of the general Plan by the numberless Particulars, often of a private Nature, that are thrown in the Way, and darken and confuse the Subject.

At the same Time it must be acknowledg'd, that as his Sentiments are sometimes very beautiful, so they are most happily expressed. But these are single Sentences; often confined to the
Extent

Extent of a Line ; have the Nature of a Proverb, and sometimes of an Epigram ; where the Wit consists in the Conciseness, and often in the placing of a Word.

Livy's Composition is much of a different Cast ; to describe it requires his own happy Pen and exalted Genius. It is not easy to alter the Situation of a Word in his longest Periods, without losing something significant in the Sense, or musical in the Sound. You have sometimes a Sentence of ten or eleven Lines, yet quite clear ; every Word expressive, and giving new Strength and added Ornament.

I know no Writer so happy in the Disposition of his Words, and the Cadence of his Periods ; the longest of which are the best ; as they lengthen, they improve ; the more Sound, the more Sense ; which roll united along, fixing your Attention, suspending your Thought, entertaining the Fancy, till, with the Period clos'd in the fullest Manner, the Ear seems charm'd, and the Soul rests satisfied.

Livy's Style in this Respect, I should compare to the Course of some famed River ; which, (always clear, generally full, and rather stately and calm than rapid and swelling) after watering extensive Plains, dividing fruitful Val-
lies,

lies, and visiting populous Cities: The Parent of Plenty, the Channel of Commerce, a Kingdom's Wealth and Ornament; gathering Strength as it flows, and swell'd with the Streams of tributary Provinces, at length in full Majesty mixes with the Ocean.

His Language is every where proportion'd to his Sentiments, and rises or falls with his Subject; and he is not more natural and tender in the Description of captive Beauty and female Distress, than great and lofty, when at the Head of adverse Legions; and like a Minister of Providence hovering over the Field of Battle, he weighs the Fate of Nations, and decides the Empire of the World. *

Good Sense, express'd and applied with Propriety, will recommend any Writer, (as it does the Speaker) which, with a Love of Virtue and Liberty, renders him still more respectable: But our Historian triumphs over every Writer not inspired, that I have yet been acquainted with in all these Respects, and in every Qualification of an Author. Never Words were more justly chosen, or happily situated and apply'd to convey the Sense; never was Sense

* L. 30, 28, &c.

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more happily apply'd to a Subject ; you cannot conceive he could say more ; you could not wish he would have said less : Nothing can exceed his Language, but the Sense conveyed in it ; nothing can equal the Sense, but the Propriety of the Application to Persons and Things. His Language has besides a peculiar Sublimity, arising from grander Ideas, or a more exalted Love of Virtue and Liberty, beyond any human Composition I know of ; yet temper'd with so much Sweetness, that you know not whether to love or admire, whether he raises or charms you most.

In other Writers you meet with scatter'd Beauties, Strains of Eloquence, and elevated Expressions, dispens'd more sparingly in different Parts : In *Livy*, you have a constant Flow of manly Expression and graceful Dignity ; Eloquence as abundant, tho' as natural, as the plainer Prose of other Writers.

If there is a Fault in the Composition of *Livy* (that we may not, by flattering his Faults, call his very Virtues in Question) it arises from this Beauty here celebrated, the Length of his Periods, all dispos'd with the utmost Elegance ; the Arrangement of the Words being
as

as beautiful as can be imagin'd ; and the Diction, tho' seemingly natural, being finish'd with the highest Strokes of Art ; and too polish'd and elegant (the Polish and Elegance being too much of the same beautiful Cast, the same flowing Cadence and happy Contrast) for all his Speakers.

Yet here perhaps, some would think it a sufficient Apology (as Beauties need an Apology) for our eloquent Author, that he does but follow the Practice of most, or all prophane Historians ; who generally put the Sentiments of others into more modern and elegant Language than that of the Times, which are the Subject of the Story ; especially, if those Times are remov'd any considerable Distance from the Age of the Writer ; as the Speeches of our Ancestors, they would tell you, so late as the *Baron's Wars*, would not be very entertaining, handed down Word for Word in a modern History of *England*.

The Character of *Livy's* Composition upon the Whole, is a natural Sublimity (natural I call it ; for tho' Nature is embellish'd with Art, yet is the Art wonderfully conceal'd by Nature, or perhaps the Product of it ; and what

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is Art in others, might be in him Nature) — a Sublimity temper'd with a most redundant Sweetness. He is strong and masculine, like eternal Truth, tender and engaging as Infant Innocence: With the Softness of the Lute, he mixes the Loftiness of the Trumpet: with the Grandeur of the Epic, the Tenderness of Elegy: Heroic Magnanimity with Female Sweetness: Laconic Energy with Attic Elegance; the Colourings of Oratory with the Solidity of Reason; the Graces of Rhetoric with Philosophic Accuracy; — is great without Extravagance; and humble without Meanness; familiar as a Friend, with the Majesty of a Prince.

You have indeed sometimes a homely Comparison in *Livy*; but this is not the Historian's; but is suppos'd to proceed from the Humour, odd Wit, antient Manners, or plain and unpolished Honesty of the Speaker.

And sometimes you have a swelling Expression, a Grandeur a little affected, and bordering upon the Hyberbole: But
neither

neither is this the Historians Language,
or the Dialect of mere *Romans*; but
comes from some *Greek*, *Sicilian*, or *Asi-*
atick.



P C H A P.

C H A P. IV.

BUT what still recommends our Historian above his Composition, is his Moral Character; his Candour, Love of Liberty and his Country; his Honesty and Virtue.

The Characters in *Livy* are generally good, except those of Kings, who are generally Tyrants; and who are painted by our warm Republican under this peculiar Character, as if Tyranny was the worst of Crimes. Such are *Nabis*, *Philip*, *Antiochus*, *Hieronimus*, and *Pyrrhus*.

Besides these, there are not many Characters in *Livy*, which are represented with any Strokes of Severity, except the infamous Tax-gatherers and Publicans; just Objects of Resentment, and which moved even the meek, the benevolent, and ever-blessed *Jesus*. The other bad Characters in the Historian, are generally represented rather under the Influence of some head-strong Passion, than wantonly wicked; and have often a Mixture of Virtue, or have performed something worthy

thy of our former Notice; so that you are rather apt to pity their ill Fortune, than condemn their ill Conduct.

The Fall of *Capua* is a melancholy Story; is told without Bitterness and Rancour, and must move Pity even in a *Roman* Breast; though this People had proved the most perfidious Friends the *Romans* ever had, and were so depraved in their Manners, as to make their Fall seem not Suffering, but Desert.

How different is the Conduct of *Tacitus* upon the Destruction of *Artaxata*! the Citizens of which voluntarily opened their Gates to the *Roman* Army, and had been guilty of no Treachery to deserted Allies, nor so much as committed one Act of Hostility against their declared Enemies: Yet the City must be laid in Ashes; which our Annalist would in Part excuse, from the Profit and Glory accruing from such a Deed: And to comfort the miserable Inhabitants, a Miracle is exhibited, expressive of the Vengeance of the angry Gods, consigning the City to utter Destruction^a.

^a Ann. 13. 40.

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The Speech of *Vibius Virius*, as was before observed, is quite in Character, and in the Style of an Epicurean^b. Yet we cannot help lamenting his Fate, and the Fate of his Fellow-Sufferers, notwithstanding their Treachery and abandoned Morals: There are some Strokes of Tenderneſs in this Speech, and in the ſad Cataſtrophe of this once ſuperb City, that makes every Man bleed who has a Country to loſe, and ſees ſo many Senators flying to Death, rather than ſurvive its Fate, and behold its miſerable Fall.

True Virtue is ſurely the moſt eaſy and happy Habit. The truly virtuous Man cannot do a diſagreeable Thing: As a Magiſtrate he cannot condemn a Malefactor but in ſuch a Manner as ſhews he pities him, and muſt make the Sufferer approve his Conduct in the very Act of Condemnation: The very blackeſt Villain receives Advantage from the Colours the virtuous Man draws him in; who has, like the Touch of *Midas*, an aſſimulating Quality; ſo that even Vice, paſſing through his Hands, catches ſome borrowed Luſtre, that

^b Liv. L. 26. 10.

makes us rather lament the Crime than detest the Criminal.

But most of *Livy's* Characters are virtuous; and he seems to delight in Panegyrick^c, as much as *Tacitus* does in Scandal. The Historian is like his *Tempanius*, *non suis vanus laudibus, non crimine alieno lætus*^d. He would willingly conceal any Thing that seems to reflect on another's Fame, except it be where the Reflection turns out to the future Honour of the Person accused^e. If he does in some Places admit popular Scandal, 'tis only to expose the Injustice of it, and give a brighter Splendor to the shaded Character. He is willing, where there is Room for a double Construction, to believe the best; and wishes it were otherwise, where he is obliged to confess the worst^f. He admits no doubtful Point, but goes upon the concurring Testimony of former Writers, where any Thing is advanced that may lessen another's Fame^g.

Where Censures are passed upon the Conduct of Generals, he is so far from aggrava-

^c See his Character of *Licinius*. L. 30. 1. ^d L. 4. 41.

^e L. 27. 10. ^f L. 8. 18. ^g L. 9. 18.

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ting them by his own Suspicions and Conjectures, that he turns Patron for the Injured; and is careful, where he can, to refute such Censures, by shewing the Impracticableness or Danger of pursuing any other Measures than those objected to^h.

In the Speech of *L. Æmilius* are finely exposed the common and popular Arts of Faction at Home, in discrediting and censuring the Conduct of Armies and Generals Abroadⁱ.

In the Reflection on *Manutius's* Conduct, who slanderously accused the Dictator, by ascribing to him the Vices most resembling and nearest to his Virtues, *Livy* shews himself a most candid Writer^k.

He esteems it the worst of Arts to raise a Name on the Ruin of another Man's; and

^h L. 31. c. 38.

ⁱ L. 44. 22.

^k [*Magister Equitum*] *ferox rapidusque in consiliis, ac lingua immodicus: Primo inter paucos, dein propalam in vulgus pro cunctatore segnem, & cauto timidum, affingens vicina Virtutibus vitia, compellabat; premendorumque superiorum arte (QUÆ PESSIMA ARS NIMIS PROSPERIS MULTORUM SUCCESSIBUS CREVIT) sese extollebat.* L. 22. 12,

with his usual good Sense tells you, that to blacken another's Character, does but blacken your own^l. He speaks with Pleasure of those happy Times, when Men lived without detracting from each other's Fame^m. Envy, he describes as a Passion arising from the Consciousness of meaner Abilities; as blind and ignorant of every Thing but how to carp at other Men's Virtues, and tarnish the Honours and Rewards of superior Meritⁿ. He gives a Foe his Due, and frequently does Justice to the Enemies of the *Roman* State; approves their Conduct, applauds their Councils, and vindicates their Rights and Honour^o.

If

^l L. 29. 37.

^m L. 2. 40.

ⁿ L. 38. 49.

• The learned Compilers of the *Universal History*, and others before them, have accused *Livy* of Partiality and Injustice in the Character he gives of *Annibal*. To omit several other Passages in *Livy* in Defence of this General, the fine Encomium he has given him in the 28th Book, c. 12. is, I suppose, equal at least to any Thing that has been said in his Favour by any other Writer; and he relates his Death after such a Manner as throws a Reflection upon the *Roman* People, L. 39. 51. As to the Perfidy and Cruelty he stands charged with, they were of common Belief at *Rome*, and no doubt supported by the

If there is a Sneer in *Livy*, or a little Mixture of Satyr, it is generally supposed to proceed from the ill Nature, ill Manners, vain Confidence, or rash Judgment of the Speaker.

Where Irony is admitted, it is great and sublime; not unbecoming the Severity of a *Cato*, or the Dignity of a *Roman Consul* ^p.

Where Scurrility is supposed to have passed, he thinks it below him to relate it ^q. Or, where he takes Notice of personal Altercations,

Testimony of Antiquity. The *perfidus Annibal, dirum Annibalem abominatus parentibus Annibal* — of *Horace* speak as much. His first Descent upon *Italy* and successive Victories could leave no lovely Idea of him in the Minds of the *Romans*, nor prejudice their Writers in his Favour. The *Gauls* for some Ages were esteemed no less cruel; which might in part be owing to the Impressions left of them in the Minds of the People from the first Sack of *Rome*. Thus cruel too were the *Romans* esteemed in *Africk* after *Scipio's* Conquests there. We can have no great Opinion of those we suffer by, and are apt to transfer our own Fears or Weakness to the Cruelty of our Enemies. It was no difficult Matter in + Queen *Elizabeth's* Time for the Jesuits in *Spain* to persuade that People, who painted Sir *F. Drake* half a Man and half a Devil, that the rest of the *English* Nation were ugly and like Devils.

^p See *Cato's* Speech, L. 34. c. 2, 3. ^q L. 42. 54.

'tis

'tis to condemn them; as in the Quarrel between the two Censors, *Livius* and *Drusus*. Besides here the Public was concerned; a public Office in the State was disgraced by the Conduct of those who bore it. At other Times, if you chance to meet with a Difference or Dispute between two Generals, 'tis not carried on with Sarcastm, Sneer, and Malice; but Sobriety, Manhood, and Reason.

In the Reproof or Reproach, which upon some Occasions is beautifully inserted, and well becomes the free Spirit of the Speakers, there is good Sense, Dignity, and manly Indignation; and sometimes an Elegance and Sublimity almost inexpressible: As when *Decius Magius*, a *Capuan*, but in the Roman Interest, was dragged in Chains to *Annibal's* Camp. "Ye have got, says he, O Campanians, the Liberty which ye fought. In the Midst of the Forum, in open Day, in the Sight of you all, to none of the Campanians second in Virtue, Birth or Fortune, I am in Chains dragged to Execution. What more cruel or bloody could ye expect was *Capua* taken and sacked by

L. 30. 37.

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“ an Enemy? Go, meet *Annibal*, beautify
“ the Streets of your City, and consecrate the
“ Day of his Arrival, that you may behold
“ this Triumph over your Countryman and
“ Citizen †.”

† L. 23. 10.



C H A P.

C H A P. V.

IT will not be expected by those who are only versed in the modern Systems of Politicks, that a Writer of so much Justice, Candour and Honesty, can be of any great Use or Service in this Respect in the present Times.

Indeed, the Practitioners in many of the Courts of *Europe*, if they could not blush, would, I imagine, laugh at some of our Author's antiquated Maxims. For Instance, "That no Reason can ever be assigned to justify a wicked Action^t," is a Truth eternal as the Foundations of Nature and clear as God's Existence; yet might be deemed in modern Practice no better than Enthusiasm and Folly.

We know not that *Livy* was either Senator or General, or in any eminent Office in the State; yet he shews in the Speeches and Conduct of his Generals, a consummate Knowledge of whatever relates to Peace or War. The natural Propensities of human Nature,

^t L. 28. 28.

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the genuine Passions, their Rise, Operation, Consequence, and proper Restraint in particular or general Bodies; the progressive Stages of public Manners; and the different Effects of Fortune, Age and Circumstances on the human Mind; the Extent and Use of Government; the true Policy of States bordering on each other, or at a Distance — he knew, and describes with equal Justice and Beauty; but the crooked Twinings of false Policy, artificial Manners, and the dark Intrigues of bad Ambition, as they were not much in Vogue during that Period of his History, which is come down to us; so they seem also not suited to his Heart, or to his Pen.

Yet a great Statesman and Politician he must be allowed, though of a different Form and Order from *Tacitus* and his Imitators, the modern Adepts in the Science. Tricking Craft, and the low Game of Sharpers, Corruption, and that infamous Application to all the ruling Passions of Mankind, which make so great a Part of *European* Policy, are scarce mentioned by him, or mentioned but to be condemned. Utility, publick Utility, as far as it is consistent with Honesty, and agreeable to the Law of Nature and Nations, is indeed explained

explained occasionally; but with all the Dignity of a *Roman* Senator, the Accuracy of a Casuist, and the Formality of a Judge.

There are few Things relating to Peace or War, few Measures necessary for the successful carrying on of this, or the just and equitable Administration of that: — Few Maxims relating to Government in general, or the different Branches, Offices, Regulations, and Provinces in particular, which make up the Body-Politic, but what are casually recommended, rationally explained, and properly introduced in the Councils or Conduct of some of our Historian's Characters. His Maxims are of general Utility, regarding no personal Interests or private Advantages, but as they are connected with the public Happiness^u.

Our Author acknowledges no Policy, which has not Honesty for its Foundation. When you have Craft and Falsehood, it is in some obnoxious Character, the wily *Carthaginian*, a crafty *Greek*, or false *Sicilian*.

^u See *Machiavel's* Discourses on the first Decade of *Livy*, and *Strad.* L. 2. prolus. 4. Histör.

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Of the same Order and Dignity in the Class of Historians are our Countrymen, *Raleigh* * and *Clarendon*. Whoever is acquainted with these Writers, will no more allow the low Crafts so much in Fashion in modern Times to be genuine and just Policy, than he will allow a Quirk or a Quibble to be Law, a Sophism to be Truth, or a Pun, Wit.

Craft is a low Expedient to serve a Turn, or supply the Place of natural Measures; the Instrument of the weak or the wicked; but true Policy, which is always founded in Honesty, is for ever the same. A Finesse or successful Intrigue, like an Ambush in War, may answer for the Time, but can have no lasting Effect on the Fate or Fortune of a Kingdom. Power in honest Hands is above a Match for the most intriguing State in *Europe*. Power, founded in Virtue, is impregnable; Policy is frequently but an Art to conceal the Defect of real Strength, and is soon seen through; and to be convicted of a Cheat, does but the more incense the deluded Power against the Deluder. Cunning is but the low

* See his Preface to the History of the World.

Mimic of Wisdom. The Distempers of a State may be falved up, or skinned over; but Distempers thus patched up, where the Effects are only regarded, and the Cause left in its Vigour, do but return with more Violence. Political Cunning is but Lying; and no great Good can accrue from Falsehood; But Integrity is not patching, but building; building deep and firm. Real Integrity is real Strength, which can stand a Storm, and is rather confirmed by Opposition. It may be endangered, but not over-powered: It may be shaken, but will not fall; or, if it falls, 'tis but to rise with new Strength and added Lustre.

Livy requires Sincerity in the Transactions of one State with another. That double Policy, which aims at pleasing contrary Parties, without Affection to either, which has in View nothing but Self-Preservation and private Advantage, without Regard to Truth, Alliances, public Liberty, or general Happiness, he more than once condemns. Temporizing, he tells you, is not the Way, either to defeat Enemies, or to confirm your Friends*.

* L. 32. 21.

So honest a Writer, it cannot be imagined, will be any more a Friend to Faction than Corruption. An open Enemy to both; he equally exposes the seditious Humour of the Tribunes of the People, who, under Pretence of redressing Grievances, wanted often nothing more than Power and Place; and the Arts of the Senate, who, when hard pushed by the Tribunes of the People, would cajole some factious Leader to desert his Party, and put a Negative to some reasonable Complaint of his Fellow-Tribunes and Fellow-Citizens.

All the Arts of Party, the Falsehoods framed, and bold Scandals spread to traduce Men in Place, and distinguish and raise Men out of Place, he equally saw and detested.

What Indignation against Envy and *Tribunian* Faction must it raise in every honest Heart, to see them so villainously and ungratefully employed against the two *Scipio's*? — Generals, who had frequently hazarded their Lives in Defence of their Country, and extended the *Roman* Name and Arms, by the Reduction of *Asia* and *Afric*, beyond what all the Generals of the Common wealth had done since the Foundation of their City, must be arraigned as the worst of Criminals,
pillaged

pillaged while alive, and defamed when dead.

Sometimes private Resentment, as well as Ambition, is represented by our Historian, as at the Bottom of public Clamour; equally masking itself under public Pretences, and pushing its Designs even to the Destruction of the State, which it affects to save.

Can there be a juster Truth than this, or a greater Instance of our Author's good Sense and Impartiality? "That where Party rules, the Republic is often left desolate, the Good of the Whole being over-looked by a more partial Attention to two different Extremes." This is in Part beautifully exemplified by the Condition in which *Greece* is represented, during the *Roman* War. "The principal Men in the *Grecian* States, says the Historian, were divided into three Parties; two of which, either by abjectly flattering the *Roman* Republic, or courting the Alliance of *Perses*, promoted their own private Interest at the Expence of the Public; the third indeed opposed both these

L. 5. 8.

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"Factions,

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“Factions, and vigorously endeavoured to
“preserve the Laws and Liberties of their
“Country.” But we may easily imagine
how feeble and unavailing the Efforts must be
of a few honest Men in a divided and cor-
rupted State.

The Unhappiness of civil Dissentions the
Historian had Reason enough to lament, from
a Perusal of the bloody Annals of his own
Country; and, as if he foresaw, and would
guard his Fellow-Citizens, and Ages to come,
against future Calamities of the same Kind,
observes, “That Faction and the Rage of
“Party have been, and will be more destruc-
“tive to a State, than foreign Wars, Famine,
“or Pestilence, and the Worst of public
“Miseries ascribed to the Vengeance of
“Heaven.”

What Pity is it that *England* cannot boast
of an Historian of equal Impartiality at least
with this honest Heathen? But so it is: Our
Writers derive the greatest Share of their
Merit from adjusting, or endeavouring to ad-
just the Rights of Subject and Sovereign; from

^z L. 45. 31.

^a L. 4. 9.

settling the Ceremonial of the Constitution; and above all, from their Partiality. An Affection for a Cause has too much disposed even the best of them to describe Persons more than Things, and to lay down Opinions for Truths. Our Compilers (for most of them are little better^b.) are generally fixed in their Principles before they begin their Work; and write on set Purpose to defend one Party, rather than expose the Extravagancies and

^b The Lord *Clarendon* is particularly to be excepted from coming under this Character, who is indeed a great Original, and had eminent Abilities by Nature for a Work of Composition. He was too, by his Profession, well versed in the Elements of Law and the Justice of the Kingdom; had besides a great Knowledge of the *English* Constitution, and of the Law of Nature and Nations; saw deep into the Foibles and Passions of human Nature, and knew Men as well as Books; bore a great Share in, and was a Witness to most of the Transactions he relates, and had the best Intelligence that could be had of such Things as he took upon Trust; had for Years, 'tis plain, his Subject and Design in View, the Advantage of which must be very great in any Scheme or Subject of Literature. The Execution is answerable; his Composition being the best that modern Times, or perhaps any Times since the *Augustan* Age, have to boast of.

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Wickedness of both. Hence every Page of our Annals is defaced and tortured. No Measures are related, without an Insinuation, Comment or tedious Dissertation to shew upon what Principles they are founded; and *Whig* and *Tory* make their Appearance in our History before the *Dane* or *Norman*. While the Manners that exalt or debase the Spirit of a Nation, the Virtues that have dared to confront bold Tyranny, and stem the Torrent of Corruption, which have made *Britains* happy at Home, and terrible Abroad, have been little regarded or reflected on. Vice and Virtue are indeed much out of the Question in the Censures passed upon, or the Encomiums given of the Historian's Actors. Party, like Charity, hides a Multitude of Sins; but no Distinction of Parts, or Pre-eminence of Wisdom, can gain our Approbation to the Conduct of him who opposes our Prejudice and Passions. Civil and positive Opinions are made the Test of Men's Characters, as much as the Practice of distinguished Moral Virtues, or the Defence of public Liberty and national Happiness were of old. Hence the worthiest Characters are defaced, and the brightest Actions shaded; for the Merit and
Value

Value of all Actions and Characters are measured by their Conformity to the Author's Principles, and weigh'd in the partial Scales of these narrow-spirited Bigots.

How miserable is it to observe (if I may be indulg'd in a Moment's Digression) the unhappy Effect, which this Party-Spirit has, upon our Conduct in Life, as well as our History; upon our Morals as well as our Writings; and the Mischief done by it, both to private Characters and the public Weal; — tho' the Review is, I confess, painful. Every honest Man does, in some Degree, in his Character or Fortune suffer by it. *Walsingham's* and *Clarendon's* Integrity, *Somers's* Capacity, and *Tillotson's* Piety and Learning, have been no Defence against Party-Prejudice, and the Malice of Faction. But this is little; the Censure of Knaves and Fools is real Applause: Scandal from some Hands is Encomium, which none but honest Men can deserve: And when Calumny has done its worst, a good Man preserves the Integrity of his Heart, which is Liberty and Peace at Home. But the Mischief done the Public is of still more fatal Consequence: Truth and Justice, our religious and civil Rights, are in their Turn both sacrificed

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to the Rage and Folly of Party. The Vigour that should be exerted in promoting the public Happiness, is employed in supporting a Faction. In the Church, we must with Pity have observed greater Heat in Defence of Points not essential, than for the Fundamentals of Christianity; greater Malice against *Arminius* and *Calvin*, than against *Collins* or *Hobbs*, and greater Reverence for *Sacheverell* and *Bastwick*, than for *Paul* or *Jesus*. And (with Pity and Indignation we must speak it) we see Men still taking more Pains for their Party, than for their Salvation. In the State, should the Time ever come when the public Treasure must be employed to counter-work a Faction; and public Offices provided to satisfy Men, and not Men to discharge the Office: — Should a Vote be the only Title to Pre-eminence and a Step to Honour: — Should parliamentary Interest be Courage, Learning, Genius, Experience, Integrity and Piety, or supply the Want of all: — Should Folly and Faction persevere to make the Trade of Corruption almost necessary; so that we should not know, which most to accuse, the Corrupters and the Corrupted, or the Opposition and the Opposers, or to whom to give most

most Credit, to them that had, or them that wanted a Place.—What Prostitution would be hereby made of public Honour, and what irreparable Injury done to the Morals as well as the Interest of the Nation?

If *Livy* is partial, 'tis what I can easily forgive him: A Partiality he has — for Liberty and his Country.

So honest is his Heart, so tender his Love for his political Parent, and so powerful his Description, that the Reader cannot confine his Joy or Sorrow, for any disastrous or happy Accident that befalls the Republic. The Historian seems transported upon every Review of the Actions and Bravery of the old *Romans*: And *Rome*, by a Mistake in Chronology, (which I can easily forgive him) is suppos'd Mistress of the World, when her Extent of Empire was but inconsiderable^c. His Country is still uppermost in his Thoughts. Her Senate, her Religion, her Laws; nay, her Hills, her Plains, her *Tyber*, the very *Roman* Sky is the Object of his Love. We catch his Spirit and Flame as we read: We almost for-

^c L. 21. c. 30.

get *Old England*, and imagine or wish ourselves Citizens and Soldiers of *Old Rome*.

Transported with the Prospect of her rising Grandeur and extended Empire, he sometimes seems impatient in the first Periods of his History to launch out into brighter Scenes; yet dwells with Pleasure on the distinguish'd Virtues of her first Patriots and Citizens; and seems charm'd with the disinterested Integrity of her Senators, the illustrious Poverty of her Dictator, the unconquerable Courage of her Troops, and the Humanity and Equity of her victorious Generals.

As a Review of the antient Manners, Virtues, Religion, Liberties, and Laws of this all-conquering City, thus honestly transports him; so the Prospect of its declining Glory seems as deeply to affect him. He is frequently melancholy upon the State of Morals in his own Time, so opposite to the Manners of the antient Republic; and reflects (tho' never was Historian more candid and good-natur'd) on the growing Riches, Avarice and Luxury, Admiration of the *Grecian* Arts, unwieldy Greatness of Empire, civil Distractions, Contempt of Parents, Contempt of Religion, and encroaching

croaching Tyranny, that appeared in his Days^d. The Tyrant *Cæsar* seems peculiarly mark'd out.

He shews himself indeed an undisguis'd and avowed Enemy to Tyranny and Tyrants: Nor is there that political Theorist, antient or modern, that inspires the same Love of public Liberty.

“ To die for one's Country: — To die
“ with Glory, rather than to live with In-
“ famy: — A Death of Honour, rather than
“ a Life of Slavery; ” — are Expressions that
seem Music to his Ear, and give Transport to
his Heart.

In what strong Colours is Tyranny painted, in the Character and Conduct of the young *Hieronimus*? *Conspexere purpuram ac diadema ac satellites armatos. — Hunc tam superbum apparatus habitumque, convenientes sequebantur mores, contemptus omnium hominum, superbæ aures, contumeliosa dicta: rari aditus non alienis modo, sed tutoribus etiam; libidines novæ, inhumana crudelitas* *.

^d Vol. II. p. 83, 88, 103, 104, 120, 184, 186, 193, 199—& L. 25. 40—26. 22. &c. * L., 24. 5.

In *Philip's* Conduct, I think, the Historian had an Eye to the Dictator *Cæsar* : At least a Reader of *Livy* cannot well peruse the Character of the one, without reflecting upon that of the other. *Philip* was extremely lascivious ; so was *Cæsar* ^f : *Philip* debauch'd the Wives of Princes and Nobles ; and it was dangerous, says our Historian, by an unseasonable Severity, to balk the King's Lust. Does not *Suetonius* say the same of *Cæsar*? It was at the *Nemean* Games that *Philip* laid aside the Ensigns of Royalty, and affected Popularity, by levelling himself with the People. It was at the *Lupercal* Games that *Cæsar* refus'd the Crown offer'd him by *Anthony* ^g. Both were absolute, complaisant Tyrants.

In the same Manner I cannot help thinking, but that *Theodotus* and *Sosis*, the Assassins of *Hieronymus*, are made to resemble *Brutus* and *Cassius* ; — that *Anthony* seems plainly pointed at under the Character of *Andranadorus* : As the Death of *Cæsar* is shadow'd forth under that of *Hieronymus* ^h.

^f *Sueton. Jul. c. 50.*

^g *Sueton. Jul. c. 79.*

^h *Liv. L. 24.*

The learned Reader will find the Resemblance still greater, by a more particular Comparison of the History of *Syracuse* in *Livy*, with that of *Cæsar's* Times; and next to a Wonder it has appear'd to me, that the Historian durst speak so plain on so critical a Subject at this Time. But the Love of Liberty was his ruling Passion, which he could not, or would not disguise, and is the Soul of his History: He dwells with Rapture on the Subject, and, with the Slaves enfranchiz'd by *Gracchus*ⁱ, seems to raise his Hands and Voice to Heaven, in Transport at the Remembrance of the inestimable Blessing. The Word has Music in the Sound. Liberty is almost every Virtue and every Blessing in one; is more than Wealth, or Fame, or Empire can give: As Tyranny, by his Manner of describing it, or the transient Mention of it, should seem to be a Term of the most just Abhorrence, as implying the greatest Crimes and Misery that Mortals can do or suffer. The Tyrant is a Spectre he startles at the Mention of, and calls out, "To Arms, to the Defence of your Temples, your Gods and your Country." The Cause

ⁱ L. 24. 14, 16.

+ of Liberty consecrates the Arms; a Tyrant being one of Nature's Monsters, a Prodigy not to be expiated but by his own Blood, the most grateful Offering to a God of Truth and Mercy.

Our honest Heathen knew no *Right Divine* in Man. He could not conceive that a Tyrant acted by a Commission from Heaven, while he was destroying Religion, or could enjoin, by God's Authority, the Violation of his Laws: — That the same Person could be sacred and sacrilegious; uncontrollable and irresistible; tho' daily bathing in the Blood of Thousands: — To stop whose murdering Hands it would be impious, and to free the labouring World, entitle the Deliverer to Damnation in the next. These high Prerogatives and sacred Authority of a Tyrant he could not conceive; and consequently claims some Grains of Allowance, if he pays not that Respect to his Character, which some unhappy Thinkers, I judge, have asserted as its Due. A Tyrant he describes as a Flatterer's, a Minion's, or a Woman's Tool; eminent for his Pride, distinguish'd by his Pomp and his Crimes; Contempt of Goodness and the Gods, infamous Lusts, inhuman Cruelty, Envy, Rapine and Revenge; — vain-glorious
with

with the Parade of Armies, marching at his Nod, as Resentment or Ambition prompts; unaccustomed to Truth and impatient of it; the Destroyer of national Councils; licentious at the Expence of equal Laws and common Liberty; capricious and vain; wanton in his Cruelty, and cruel in his Lust; destroying the Order of the Civil, and the Happiness of the Moral World^k.

More might be said upon this Subject in an Age and Nation, where *Roman* Literature was more in Fashion; where *Roman* Liberty was not deem'd Romantic, and *Roman* Virtue not ridiculous.

But to the Honour of our Author it must be observ'd, that these Sentiments of Liberty with his other Reflections, political or moral, are not officiously display'd, or coldly recommended by naked Precept. *Livy's* Wisdom is convey'd in a more agreeable Manner. Truths are taught and explain'd by Actions. You have not the Theory and dead Letter, but the Practice of a just or bad Policy, and the Nature of Virtues, Vices, and Passions, in living and

^k *Livy* passim.

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real Characters, and exemplify'd by Historic Facts; by which the Historian departs not from his proper Character, nor assumes the Air and Style of a Pedagogue. Instruction is given in the Conduct of his Generals, — in the Relation, Circumstances and Event of any Action, or in the Arguments which are introduc'd to support a Matter in Question; — in Speeches not obtruded upon the Reader, and Debates not impertinent; so that the Form and Laws of History are not violated; the Moral or Reflection being as much a Part of it, as the Relation of any Fact or Accident.

Our judicious Historian rarely reflects or moralizes in his own Person. Where you have Maxims of Prudence, or Observations in Morals, they come from others, and from such who may be supposed capable of making them. Thus *multa quæ impedita natura sunt, concilio expediuntur* ¹ — is the Advice given by *Annibal* to the *Tarentines* upon a very proper and singular Occasion, *viz.* The transporting Ships over Land to a distant Port. And who could be a more proper Person to give this Advice than *Annibal*? That *Annibal*, who had passed

¹ L. 25. II.

the *Alps*, then deemed impassable, and cover'd with the Horrors of Winter, at the Head of thirty thousand Men ?

Thus the Speeches in *Livy*, which abound with the wisest Maxims, and most exalted Morals are exactly suited to the Character of the Speaker and the Occasion they are applied to.

How exactly, for Instance, is the Character of that honest, artless, plain Patriot, *Fabius Maximus*, preserv'd in his Speeches ? He flatters no Passion, applies no popular Arts ; by the most powerful Reason he prevails ; by Truth alone he conquers. His Maxims, almost like divine Inspiration, enlighten and command you. By the most undisguised Honesty and plain Patriotism, he baffles all Opposition, removes all Objections, sets at Nought the Efforts of Faction, and the Odium attending the Exercise of the most distinguish'd Office in the *Roman State*.

His Speech to *Æmilius Paulus* is one of the best Compositions in *Livy*, in the *Roman History*, in all Antiquity. 'Tis a Lesson of good Sense, sound Policy, and true Glory. You may read it again and again with new Delight and Improvement. The Speaker was himself
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the Example of what he taught. The Occasion was the most proper and urgent. There is more Wisdom (I mean of the didactic and dogmatic Kind) in this Speech, than in any besides that I remember in *Livy*; yet is there not one Sentence, (tho' there are almost as many Maxims as Periods) but what has an exact Relation to the present Subject^m.

All *Fabius's* Speeches are worthy a particular Attention. Besides which, I would recommend those of *Quintus Capitolinus* in the third Book, of *Camillus* in the fifth, of *Manlius Torquatus* against redeeming the Captives taken at *Cannæ*, in the twenty-second; — of *Scipio's* to his Soldiers, upon the Sedition in *Spain*, in the twenty-eighth; — of *Anni-bal's* in the thirtieth; — and of *Flaminius* at the general Diet of *Corinth*, before he left *Greece*, in the thirty-fourth. In these, and indeed in most of the Speeches recorded by our Historian, tho' Strength and Sweetness, Majesty and Grace, Elegance of Diction, Justness of Sense, and Beauty of Moral be conspicuous; yet the Application of the Whole to the Subject in Debate, and the Character of

^m L. 22. 39.

the Speaker, is so proper and natural, that you imagine you are but reading the History of Fact, while you are engag'd in some of the finest Lessons of civil Wisdom and Moral Discipline, that are to be found in the Gentile World.



C H A P. VI.

THE Advantage and Beauty of Virtue our Historian describes like one who felt it deep at Heart, who loved it as his Friend, Companion, and Delight; and recommends it as the Sovereign Happiness of Mankind, and the best and only Title to divine Protection.

+ Virtue, I know not how, has of late been almost lost in Men's Enquiries after it. Our Morality has degenerated into Debate and Controversy, and our Divinity into mere Philosophy. Or rather may we not say, that we have got a Philosophy without a Morality, a Morality without a Religion, a Religion without a Divinity, and a Divinity without a God? We are grown fonder of Words than Things, and more eager to invent new Notions, than make a due Use and Improvement of the old. Pride and Pedantry have taken Place of moral Practice; and cold metaphysic Heads (which were never intended by Nature for public Life, or the Reformation of public Manners) have supplanted warm and honest

honest Hearts : The modern Moralift rather tells you, what is the Effence of Virtue in fcolastic Terms, and formal Definitions, than displays its Beauty in his Life and Language ; he difputes when he fhould perfuade ; diftinguifhes and refines when he fhould recommend and enforce ; and is more a Wrangler and a Ca- fuift, than an Orator and a Moralift.

That beft Philosophy, the active, is never to be learnt from fuch Mafters. To form a juft Example of Moral and Civil Virtues, I fhould prefer our Author, and one other of the fame happy Geniusⁿ, to all the Moralifts, an- tient and modern, put together. The Hifto- rian's Morality is not a shadowy Apparatus of Terms and Definitions, a lifelefs Delineation of the Paffions, Virtues, and Duties of human Nature ; but a Draught in full Life, in hifto- ric Characters, and real Manners. You are charm'd with the Colours, and delighted as well as improv'd ; not only edified, but ani- mated : While your Head is inftructed, your Heart is amended ; you are taught not to dif- pute, but praftife ; to live uprightly, to act not the felfifh, or the fordid ; but the Manly, the

ⁿ *Xenophon.*

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Public, the *Roman*, and (what was esteem'd the Foundation and Crown of every Virtue) the religious Part.

Yet occasionally, as Persons or Things present themselves, he distinguishes in the justest Manner, (without the Formality of a Professor, or the intemperate Vanity of a Pedant) between Cunning and Prudence, Boldness and Rashness, Religion and Superstition, Liberty and Licentiousness, a Title and a Character, nominal Honour and real Honesty. He shews, that a vain Confidence differs widely from a rational Hope; — that Caution is not Cowardice; nor a prudent Delay in Matters of Moment, a blameable Backwardness.

But this is no more than any Writer of good common Sense, might have said as well as *Livy*; the Labour of the Head, not the Dictate of the Heart. The Morality most admirable in him, is that philosophic Taste, those just Sentiments of true Glory, which in a Manner distinguish him from all the Writers of Antiquity.

True Merit he makes to consist, not in Shew, Ostentation, and popular Appearance, in the Pomp of a Triumph, or the Eclat of a Victory, but in the Contempt of vulgar Applause,

plause, Equanimity under unjust Censure, and an Inflexibility in what is right and just, tho' in Opposition to the Sentiments of the World beside. A truly great Soul is equally firm against vain Glory and false Infamy. To avoid Fame, he makes a just Title to Fame; and the Resignation of the first Office in the State for the public Good, a greater Glory than the full and glittering Exercise of it. In a Competition for Precedence in the Pomp of a Triumph, the Man who yields the foremost Place, (the Merit of the Competitors being suppos'd equal) gains the Prize of Glory by his Submission: Real Merit needs no Trappings; a Conqueror is triumphant tho' on Foot; rises by his Humility, and gains Glory by the Contempt of it. The Deference paid, and due Applause given to superior Merit, even to the lessening of the Character of him who gives the Applause, is a Modesty more to be admired, than the Honour of the preferr'd Conqueror. Moderation and Humanity after a Victory is esteemed more commendable than the Victory itself: As true Greatness of Mind is made to consist in the Contempt of Wealth, and to despise, not to acquire a Crown, the true Glory. Pleasures are the most dange-

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rous Enemies to Truth and Virtue ; and he that subdues his Passions is the most distinguish'd Conqueror.

These are some of the Maxims of our Writer ; not impertinently introduc'd, or officiously obtruded upon the Reader, but naturally arising from the most proper Occasions ; inserted in the Speeches, and exemplified in the Actions of his principal Characters. 'Tis not a Virtue in Theory, but in Life and Practice, in Benevolence of Manners, Candour of Heart, and Integrity of Soul, that so powerfully charms us in this Writer.

+ What is call'd Virtue in some Characters, makes an awkward and shocking Appearance ; is severe, harsh, and forbidding. The Patrons of Vice could wish no greater Advantage to their Cause, than a sufficient Number of such Advocates for Virtue : If they advise, 'tis with ill Manners ; if they reflect, 'tis with ill Nature ; if they reprove, 'tis with Insolence : Pedants in Theory, and Inquisitors in Practice ! Men, who have learned Virtue by the Book, talk of it by Rule ; having Heads stuff'd with Definitions and Distinctions, but never felt the all-conquering Charms of Virtue at the Heart ! Moralists, whose System of Virtue is unconnected

ned with Goodness; whose Hands never open to relieve; whose Eye never drops a Tear of Humanity; whose Features speak no Complacency of Heart, or Good-will to Mankind.

From observing the Manners of these Virtuoso's, or from our philosophical Disputes, concerning the Nature and Essence of Virtue, Goodness in my Ear sounds better than Virtue. Our Historian, as he makes Honesty the Foundation of his Policy, so is Goodness the Crown of his Morality. *The best of Men* is with him not only the best, but the greatest Character. No Victory is deem'd so conspicuous as Superiority in a Competition for a Title so glorious. No Offices, Honours, or Triumphs decreed by People or Senate, can equal the Honour of so distinguished a Merit°.

Thus does our Historian moralize, but still by Example, more than Precept; which renders Virtue more lovely, as being practicable; at the same Time that it gives us an high Opinion of the Dignity of human Nature,

° L. 29, 14. — 30, 40.

when we see Mortality not incapable of such exalted Degrees of Moral Perfection.

As *Tacitus* seems to have given us the very worst Side, and lowest Degeneracy of human Nature in the Picture of *Tiberius*, and his other Actors; so *Livy* has exhibited the fairest Draught of Moral Virtue, and human Manners in the Character and Conduct of his Heroes; particularly in the Example of *Scipio*. Not that I suppose this a fictitious Draught, made up, like the Life of *Pythagora*, or *Apollonius Tyaneus*, by *Jamblicus* and *Philostratus*, of romantic Falshoods and a visionary Virtue. *Scipio's* was a real Character: An imaginary Portrait would neither have affected the Reader nor the Writer so much as this plainly does. The Writer was in Love with it, and so must the Reader be, who has either Sense of Beauty, and Taste for Elegance of Manners, or a Breast susceptible of the Impressions of Humanity, or a Heart warm'd with the Love of public Liberty, or a Soul to be fired with the Memory of antient Heroism.

But 'tis not the Warrior we are here recommending and applauding in the Historian, or in
the

the Hero ; tho' there is a Novelty in his Conduct that charms us, and a Gallantry that we cannot but admire : What he projects, is almost instantly executed ; if he commands, his Authority is irresistible ; when he appears ^p, *An-nibal* himself retires ; if he fights, he conquers ; strong Cities are taken, Armies routed, Seditions quell'd, Kingdoms subdu'd, Fleets equipp'd, and Troops transported with a kind of divine *Fiat* : Nothing obstructs the Success of his Measures ; and we can scarce divest ourselves of the Opinion that some Divinity attends him. Upon his first Landing, *Africk* is in a Manner abandon'd ; and *Carthage* under that Dread and Consternation, as if their City had been taken by Storm : — Yet after all, 'tis the Principle of Goodness in this Character, which most powerfully charms us ; particularly in the Treatment of *Allucio* and the Captive Maid, before referr'd to. And in what an amiable Light does the Hero here appear ? Not more victorious by his Arms than by his Generosity ! His Heart overflows with Humanity. It should seem, as if he thought it the truest Glory to do Good, and to shew Mercy. The Historian's as well as

^p At *Locri*.

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the Heroe's Heart, seems susceptible of the tenderest and most generous Impressions: — To triumph in any Instance of Humanity more than in a Battle gain'd; in releasing, rather than making Prisoners; as if Power was but another Name for Goodness. The Hero fights, as if it were but to save; and conquers, but to make the vanquish'd happy; to leave Monuments of his Mercy, rather than of his Valour behind him. The Historian has the peculiar Art of describing that Flow of Joy, which arises from some distinguish'd Instance of Goodness communicated and receiv'd, as if himself had been (nay, the Reader, from the Description, and the correspondent Passions arising in his Breast, may imagine himself to be) both the Benefactor and the Person oblig'd. *Livy* every where gives to Benevolence and Goodness the highest Applause; as if by these Man exerted his best Powers, and the highest Excellence of his Nature, and the Gods their best Prerogatives; — as if in Goodness alone, Men could emulate the Gods, and the Gods themselves had no other Title to Divinity.

It must be observed upon this Head, that *Livy* has to his Morality added Religion; as
sensible

sensible how feebly Man, Society, or human Nature, could be supported without it. He frequently expresses his Sense of Providence, and the Inability of Man to bring about his own Devices without the Assistance of Heaven^a.

Criminals in our Historian are not treated only as civil Offenders, but as Violaters of the divine Laws, and obnoxious to the Vengeance of the Gods; particularly murdering Tyrants, the perjured and sacrilegious.

Nay, what a Picture does he draw of a Whore, and in what different Colours from the *Poppæas* and *Sabinas* of *Tacitus*!—"A
" Sorceress, whose poisonous Charms extin-
" guish in Youth all Sense of Duty to Pa-
" rents, and Regard for the Gods^r.

If upon Occasion, and 'tis but rarely he has Occasion, he recounts the Effects of Cruelty, Lust, or Sacrilege, he paints so that you are struck with Horror, as if yourself was the Sufferer by, or the Sacrifice made to the most cursed Passions. You are instructed to avoid the Crime, from the Horror of the Deed and the Punishment attending it. Providence

^a L. 23. 22—29. 8, &c.

^r L. 38. 11.

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is still acquitted, and, in this Respect, you are easy.

Upon the most unpromising Appearances, and trying Occasions, as in the Sufferings of helpless Innocence, *Livy* is not himself staggered, nor staggers his Reader with Doubts and Difficulties concerning the Ways of Heaven. The Doctrine of a just and righteous Administration in the moral World, is still asserted and supported. Thus upon the unhappy Fate of *Peris* and *Theoxena* and their Children, who were forced to dispatch themselves to avoid *Philip's* Cruelty: “ The
“ Curses of the People, says the Historian,
“ which fell upon *Philip* on this Occasion,
“ being heard by all the Gods, made him turn
“ his Cruelty upon his own Blood ¹.”

Tacitus, upon some bloody Executions, ordered, I think, by *Nero*, triumphs as it were upon the Occasion, as it gives him an Handle to accuse Providence and insult Heaven ².

With Regard to the Public, *Livy* saw and lamented the declining Cause of Religion, and is every where full of the unaffected Piety of the old *Romans*. Their religious Conduct,

¹ L. 40. 4, 5.

² *Vid.* Ann. 14. 12—& 16. 33.

their Application to the Gods in every Exigency, and Expectation of Deliverance from national Calamities only by the Favour of Heaven, he seems to have displayed in the most studied Manner, to expose, and, if possible, to amend the infidel Age, in which he lived.

Religion is made to consist in Purity of Heart and Integrity of Manners, rather than the Pomp of a Sacrifice, or the Magnificence and Splendour of outward Ceremonies, and costly Oblations.

As to the Superstition so commonly objected to *Livy* by every low Translator of Bastard Classics to set aside the Merit of our Author, and recommend their own poultry Performances, the Objectors seem to be ignorant, that the Prodigies related are not related meerly as extraordinary Appearances, and to be wondered at for their contravening the Course of Nature; but as providential Interpositions, affecting the public Measures and Councils, and which frequently produced an Act of State and public Supplications. Considered in this Light, and in this Light they were considered by the old *Romans*, they were as necessary and proper to be recorded by the Historian, as Decrees

crees of the Senate or Battles fought; the one being frequently connected with the other". Our Author was not that Slave to Superstition he is generally represented; and upon several Occasions, treats the Prodigies he relates as superstitious, and unworthy of Credit". So ill-grounded and unjust is the Remark of the Fathers *Catrou* and *Rouille*, " That he swallowed all the wonderful Stories that were current among the People for real Miracles".

As to the superstitious Belief and Practice of old *Rome*, I think it is easily accounted for. They were religious yet ignorant; and whenever Ignorance and Religion unite, Superstition is the natural Offspring.

The Ladies in the *Roman* History, and I suppose in all Histories till modern Times (when Husbands and Fathers have thought it for their Interest to have their Wives and Daughters instructed in the Principles of the minute Philosophy) have been more religious and (their Fears being greater, and their Knowledge less) more superstitious than the Men.

" Vol. III. p. 266. 284.

" Vol. II. p. 35.

Vol. III. p. 284. 338. Vol. IV. p. 22.

* Preface

to the *Roman* History.

The Superstition of the Vulgar in the *Romish* Church is in a great Measure owing to their Ignorance. And in Proportion as Ignorance and Zeal prevail in any of the foreign Churches; in the same Proportion, I presume, we may find their Superstition increasing.

Nay, it has tainted their History, as well as their Manners; and we need the less wonder at *Livy*, when we find a Popish Bishop seeming at least as credulous as our Pagan Historian. The Bishop of *Rhodes* relating the Murder of *Henry the Great* by *Ravillac*, thus comments upon it: “Certainly Heaven
“and Earth had given but too many Pro-
“nosticks of what arrived. A very great
“Eclipse of the whole Body of the Sun in
“1608; a terrible Comet which appeared
“the Year proceeding: Earthquakes in seve-
“ral Places. Monsters born in divers Coun-
“tries of *France*. Rains of Blood, which
“fell in several Places. A great Plague in
“1606. Apparitions of Phantoms, and many
“other Prodigies kept Men in Fear of some
“terrible Event.”

History of *Henry King of France and Navarre*, p. 577.

As

As to the old *Romans*, notwithstanding their Superstition, a Reader, who can distinguish between the Use and Abuse of any Thing, may reap considerable Advantage from observing their religious Practice.

In this Respect, *Livy* is peculiarly worthy the Perusal of a modern Infidel.

This Man will tell us of the great Exploits of the antient *Romans*, and the Efforts of mere Reason and human Virtue in this People. And can he refrain from blushing, when he pretends Reason for trampling on the Religion of his Country; which these *unenlighten'd Romans* (as he calls them) thought the worst of Crimes.

Again, an Infidel would find from our Historian, that the Establishment of Religion was found necessary to the Security of civil Society: — That the Happiness or Misery of a Nation, generally bore a Proportion to their Observance or Neglect of the Deity; or, in other Words, that the Rectitude of human Actions being best secured by the Awe of a supreme Being, to this religious Principle destroyed, must succeed Licentiousness of Action and Depravity of Morals.

Again,

Again, our Infidel would find, that a Religion without Priests, Temples, and Ceremonies, was a Thing unknown to Antiquity; — that Miracles were thought no Discredit, but a Confirmation of Religion; — that a Maintenance out of the public Revenue to those who waited at the Altar, was not thought a Misapplication of the public Treasure; — that Ornament and Splendor were not deem'd unnecessary in the Ministers and Ministrations of the public Worship.



C H A P. VII.

FROM what has been said of the Composition and Virtue of our Historian, his general Character may be, in some Measure understood, tho' not easily express'd.

He was deeply sensible of the Uncertainty of human Greatness, and the superior Excellency of Virtue, to every outward Accomplishment and titular Honour ; — had a truly philosophical Contempt of Riches and false Grandeur ; — esteem'd Poverty itself a Virtue, Poverty and Virtue in the same Character as the Height of Virtue : — was an Enemy to Luxury, as the Bane of civil Life ; — to Infidelity, as the Source of Immorality ; and to Faction and civil Arms, as destructive of civil Liberty and Happiness. With this comprehensive View of public Manners and their Tendency, he had the justest Sentiments of domestic Order, filial Duty, female Decency, and Submission ; with the most delicate Sense of the tenderer Passions, parental Affection, and conjugal Love. He conveys not one
loose

loose Idea, or unchaste Sentiment, through his whole Work.

With the fullest Persuasion of the Necessity and Expediency of Honesty, to carry on the Business of the Public, it will be less wonder'd at, that he requires Integrity in the Transactions of private Life ; — that an Enemy to Faction in the State, should be no Friend to Party in a Neighbourhood ; esteeming it infamous to enter into, and support other Men's Animosities, or to use your Power to gratify other People's Passions, and revenge their Quarrels. He was surely a very honest Man ; and has exemplify'd his own Definition thro' his whole History ; “ approving and disapproving according to his own Judgment, “ and wearing a Conscience not flexible and “ pliable to the Nod and Direction of “ others.”

He was a Lover of Mankind ; and if he was ever an Enemy, it was only to the Oppressive, the Envious and Detracting. His Heart seems to bleed for the Misery he relates : He shares in the Sorrows, and triumphs in the Joys of his Fellow-Creatures ; — pities even the Offender he is obliged to expose ; and

glories in other Men's Virtues, as if he was the better for them.

A Love of Virtue and of Liberty was indeed the ruling Passion of his Soul. These diffus'd through his Writings, raise or improve the same Passions in his Readers; and are able (was any Mortal Charm sufficient for the Task) to awaken the dying Embers of Liberty and Virtue even in a *British* Breast.

To inspire, or revive the same honest Ardour in his Countrymen, was, I question not, the Design of his History. To this End, he has set the brightest Side of every Action, the Prudence of every Measure, the Splendor of every Virtue, and the worthy Part of every Character in the fairest Light (for he was one of those great Souls to whom Nothing in the Moral World was too difficult to comprehend or express; — no Actions so bright, which he could not illuminate; no Characters so high, which he could not adorn.) His Consuls have Dignity; his Senate, Order, Wisdom, and Majesty; his Generals, Authority: — His Characters are great, his Manners virtuous and chaste: You have Discipline in the Army; Bravery

Bravery in Action; Sagacity in Council; Faith in Alliances; Integrity in the Administration of public Justice; Severity in the Punishment of public Enormities; Unanimity in Office; and Frugality in the public Expences.

His Subject was indeed great, and he has manag'd it accordingly; for never was Language more happily apply'd to a Subject, or more expressive of the various Passions, Actions, and Characters intended to be described. He is graceful and modest as Maiden Blushes, yet strong and masculine as *Roman* Vigour; beautiful as infant Innocence, yet elevated and grand as the Majesty of the *Roman* Empire; happy as heart-felt Ease and conscious Virtue; harmonious as Nature, and benevolent like its God.

In his whole Composition you have nothing misplaced or redundant: Every Word has its Emphasis; and every Period its Beauty. *Livy* is not chargeable (if we might say so of a mere Mortal) with one Impertinence in Thought, or Impropriety in Diction. He connects his Story with all the Art which the Painter employs in mixing his Lights and

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Shades: He has indeed a fine Hand ; — is correct, yet natural ; natural, yet elegant; and majestic in his Simplicity; — exact without Minuteness; particular without being tedious; general where 'tis proper, without Confusion ; — plain, yet never low ; sweet, yet never satiates; — strong, but not rash ; and great, without Extravagance. He has all the Clearness and Purity of *Cæsar*, with superior Majesty ; — all the Beauty of *Cur-tius* without the Gaiety ; all his Brightness, without his Glitter and Tinsel ; — all the Vigour and Masculine Moral of *Salust*, with a more candid Spirit, a finer Imagination, and a more flowing Eloquence. He seems indeed to have been born to charm, as others are to speak ; ——— to add a Grace to Nature, a Dignity to Truth, and a Beauty to Virtue. His Thoughts are not only the properest, but the most happy, and elevated : His Expressions are answerable ; and he conceives not more nobly than he speaks. While his Reason captivates the Soul, his Harmony charms the Ear, and the Power of this double Enchanter is irresistible. With a Beauty and Sweetness, which all the Delicacies of Sense, and all the Regions of lavish Nature cannot equal,

equal, he has a Wisdom to which old Age might listen without Disdain, and the wisest Legislators improve by.

Whatever Wisdom, Virtue, or Eloquence, is ascribed to the Heroe or the Statesman of old *Rome*, I think, our Historian was endowed with. None but such a one could have so thoroughly entered into their Characters, express'd their Sentiments, or described their Actions. I will not say that every Speech ascribed to *Camillus*, *Fabius Maximus*, *Scipio*, *Annibal*, &c. are the real Expressions of those Heroes : But I think it impossible to imagine Sentiments or Actions more proper, or more adapted to the Characters, which Antiquity has handed down of those extraordinary Men. Nay, I must own, I think the Historian excels his Heroes ; and has given them a Virtue, Wisdom, and Eloquence, which none but himself was possess'd of in so eminent a Degree. That Prudence, consummate as Mortality can attain to ; that Wisdom, more than Oracular, that Greatness and Firmness of Soul, superior to every Passion or Appetite for Fame, equally unmov'd by vain Glory, and false Infamy, ascribed to *Fabius Maximus*, were at least as much the Historian's as the

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Heroe's. That lovely Picture of antient Heroism, that bright Portrait of human Manners so beautifully dispos'd in the Character of *Scipio*, had, I am persuaded, an answerable Idea in the Writer's Soul.

His History exhibits the justest Pattern of Perfection in human Composition and Moral Virtue, that the Heathen World has to boast of (if we except the Life of *Socrates*, as writ by his two Disciples, *Plato* and *Xenophon*.) His Language is Music to the Ear ; his Virtue Rapture to the Soul. He paints so, that you could for ever gaze ; he speaks so, that you could for ever hear. His Narration transports you : His Liberty fires you ; his Goodness charms you ; his Love to his Country endears both it and him to your best Affections, as Men and Citizens. His Philosophy is rational and manly ; practicable tho' great, and tho' sublime, yet sober : — Recommended by the most lovely Colours, in which every virtuous Soul beheld it, and exceeded by nothing but (where 'tis a Glory to be outdone) the Philosophy of Heaven.

I wonder not that the Beauties of the first City in the World wanted Admirers, while
he

he spake^z. The Extent of the *Roman* Empire reflects not so much Glory upon this People as his Writings. The Conquests of their most distinguish'd Generals is low Merit, compared with his Virtues and Genius. Was every Monument of *Roman* Greatness destroy'd, more than this is preserv'd in his History: Was every Monument of their Greatness still extant, it would be disgrac'd by the Sublimity and Excellency of his Work.

^z *Quanta fuit operis excellentia ; ut per tantum maris & terrarum spacium, ad urbem orbis dominam & domitis nationibus imperantem, non urgente negotio, non ob ipsius videndæ desiderium : in ætate presertim Cæsaris Augusti : SED OB UNUM DUNTAXAT EJUS INCOLAM AUDIENDUM, concursus illustrium feret. Petrarch. L. 2. Tract. 2. C. 5.*



C H A P. VIII.

AFTER what has been said of our two Writers, it will not be difficult to form a Comparison betwixt them.

Livy, such was his good Fortune in a Subject, professes to abstain from Affairs foreign to the *Roman* State, having Work enough upon his Hands to relate what properly belonged to his Story. *Tacitus*, for Want of Matter at Home, such was his Unhappiness, makes frequent, and sometimes tedious Excursions into foreign Affairs and distant Kingdoms.

Where *Livy* chances to refer to, or quote Antiquity, it is not so much to expose, as to amend the Practice of his own Times, and the ill Morals and Impiety of the Age he lived in. When *Tacitus* does it, it is to shew his own Erudition, his Malice or ill Will, to Persons often more than Things.

Livy's History is plainly designed as a Lesson and Instruction to his own and future Ages. *Tacitus's* Writings, a Satyr and Reproach upon the last.

In

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In Style and Composition, *Tacitus* is concise and smart, *Livy* diffusive and grand. *Tacitus's* Metaphors are short Flashes, which have sometimes more of the affected Poetaster, than of the natural and equal Sublimity which abounds in *Livy*.

Tacitus has too many Actors or Figures in his Piece which breed Confusion: *Livy's* Characters are not over crowded, but appear distinct and full. He gives every Action its true Proportion and Description. The Parts are duly ordered, justly arranged, and beautifully connected; whence arises a Whole regular and coherent.

Words cannot be more happily contrived or placed to convey the Sense, than in *Livy*. His Descriptions are so natural that they are present Realities to the Eye; as his Sentiments are so just, that they are rather Conviction, than Persuasion. In *Tacitus*, you are sometimes to wait a while, to look backwards and forwards, into your own Breast, and into the Opinions of others, before you can come at his Meaning from his Words. The Language of *Livy* exactly answers the Sense; and you are under no Difficulty to take his Meaning upon the first Reading. But the Language of
Tacitus

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Tacitus is too narrow, if any Thing, for the Sense; which will bear dilating in your own Mind: You may stand a while to digest a Thought, which you find too big to take in at first Sight.

In *Livy's* Speakers, you have the masculine Eloquence of the high-spirited *Roman*. In *Tacitus* too often, the affected Flourishes of a declamatory Pedant.

Upon other Occasions, *Tacitus* is unseasonably philosophical, and boyishly eloquent: As where the *Reatineans*, upon a Project being formed of diverting the *Tiber* to prevent its over-flowing, presume to inform a *Roman* Senate, “ That the Direction of Nature was
“ best in all natural Things; and that the
“ River, when bereft of its auxiliary Streams,
“ would flow with diminished Grandeur^a.”

Livy upon such an Occasion, or any uncommon Appearance in Nature, would relate no more than the bare Fact; or perhaps add, that the Prodigy was expiated.

Tacitus where a seeming Irregularity in the common Course of Things has given Occasion

^a Ann. i. 79.

to ignorant Antiquity to run into the Fable and Miracle, is not careful to refute vulgar Errors, and remove popular Prejudices; but often improves the Absurdities of Antiquity. *Livy* chuses rather to undeceive his Reader, by assigning natural Causes for what was before deemed miraculous.

Livy pleases, engages, and transports the Reader by the most natural Eloquence in the World. *Tacitus* would strike and astonish by the Wonderful; — the laboured Description, and the pointed Wit; — displays the Head more than the Heart; — the Courtier, the Politician, and the Pedant, more than the plain honest Man, and serious Moralist.

Livy's Art is so finely concealed, that you see nothing but Nature: — Nature with a sublimer Air indeed, and somewhat a lovelier Cast than common; but still his Nature, his very Sublimity is natural. But *Tacitus* has a stately Pride, and affected Grandeur. *Livy* is raised, yet natural; lofty, yet plain and easy. *Tacitus* is not great, but monstrous, disproportioned, and disagreeable.

Livy paints from Nature and the common Appearances and Effects of Passion. *Tacitus* enters into the inmost Soul of Man, and
drags

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drags into Light all the darker Tribe of corrupt and base Affections.

Livy's Sublimity arises from the Greatness of the Idea conveyed, the Majesty of the Image, and the real Circumstances of the Fact, or the Similitudes made Use of to illustrate the Fact. *Tacitus* is short, where sublime. His Sublimity sometimes consists more in Sound than Sense; in Wit, Repartee, labour'd Expression and tedious Description, than heroic Deeds or noble Images.

Even Reproof, where given in *Livy*, is with Dignity. In *Tacitus*, with low Scurrility. In *Livy*, the Reprover shews a serious Sense of Injuries suffered, or Wrongs done, or apprehended: *Tacitus's* Reprovers are mere Raillers: Retailers of personal Scandal; and display the Author's wanton Wit and scurrilous Temper, more than their own Innocence tarnished, or Rights invaded, or Danger feared, or Damage done.

Livy raises Pity and Compassion in his Descriptions of the Unfortunate and Miserable: *Tacitus* strikes you with Horror, and would raise your Indignation against both Gods and Men.

Our

Our two Writers resemble in some Respects those two great Masters in their Art, *Michael Angelo*, and *Raphael Urbin*, and what the Connisseurs in Painting tell us of their different Tastes. *Tacitus* is, like *Michael*, fond of the Horrid, the Cruel, the Shocking and Frightful: *Livy*, like *Raphael*, delights most in the Graceful, the Noble, the Beauteous and Divine. *Michael's* beloved Object was a Wretch in Tortures or the Agonies of Death: *Raphael's* the Charms of a pious, an humble and heavenly *Madonna*.

Nothing can more justly answer the Character of our great Historian, than that of this Painter. His Colours, they say, are of the most charming Elegance. His Airs were most noble, with the sweetest Simplicity: His Pieces had Grace with Propriety; and his Composition was rich and abundant, but with Gravity and Discretion. His Attitudes were grand and graceful; and Nature herself was scarce so beautiful as she appeared in his Drawings; for he copied not from her, but from the Idea he had of her.

With Respect to the Morality of our two Writers, *Livy* relates his Story in the plainest and justest Manner; and you are commonly
left

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left to form your own Reflections upon it, and to Moralize as you please. *Tacitus* rather twists his Story in order to introduce his own Observations. He makes a random Use of his Wit: *Livy* is Wise with Discretion. *Tacitus* is presumptuous and dogmatical; and submits nothing to the Judgment of the Reader: When *Livy* speaks in his own Person, 'tis so rarely that you are all Attention; and 'tis with so much Modesty and Goodness, that you cannot blame him, except it were for saying no more.

Where you have Reflections of the Moral Kind in *Livy*, they are most happily introduced, and upon the justest Occasions; — are pertinent and directly applicable to the Subject in Hand; and farther a common Reader would scarce extend them. *Tacitus's* Maxims are untowardly brought in; and not always in Season. The Reader is apt to view them as detached Pieces of Wisdom, applicable to other States, Times, and Occasions, rather than the Present.

Tacitus instructs by the dry Formality of Precept: *Livy* by the engaging Persuasion of Example. *Tacitus's* Writings have a speculative Cast: *Livy's* History is composed for
Life

Life and Action. *Tacitus* will fill your Head. *Livy* will imbue your Heart.

If *Livy* makes any Reflection upon Men or Things: — Upon the Corruption of the Times, Depravity of Manners, and the Source of all Misery, the Decay of Religion; he does it with the serious Air of one deeply affected with the Love of his Country, and sadly concerned for its declining Happiness and Glory. But *Tacitus* seems to indulge a malicious Rancour of Soul; which disposes him to reflect on Persons more than Things: And where he moralizes, it seems often to proceed from a Fondness to display his own Sagacity, rather than to instruct, or amend Mankind.

Tacitus's fine Thoughts are the Product of Study, and a refining Head: *Livy*'s noble Sentiments, the Result of superior good Sense, and an honest Heart.

Livy sometimes omits a Speech, where the Reader expects it, and imagines it might be introduced with the greatest Propriety; as when *Scipio* first arrives at the Armies in *Spain*^b. *Tacitus* catches at every Opportunity to harangue. In the Speeches of *Livy*, the Man-

^b L. 26.

ners and Character of the Speakers, are preserved with the greatest Decorum: In *Tacitus* the Wit and Politician shew themselves upon all Occasions.

He tells us indeed that the Centurion, the Soldier, the Barbarian, the Citizen, or the Slave did, or spoke, or thought as he relates; but 'tis generally *Tacitus* that makes the Speech, conducts the Action, and forms the Thought; and from Head to Tail all his Speakers, *Plebes, Primores, Juventus, Senes, Agmen Romanum*, are all Politicians. *Tacitus* is like some of the Writers of our modern Comedies, who have no other Design in their Productions, than to display their own Genius: Nothing is less apparent than Nature and common Life: All the Actors have a Taste for Intrigue; and all the Speakers, be they Courtiers or Footmen, are Masters of Wit and Repartee.

The Moral and Policy in *Livy*, exactly answer the Characters to whom they are ascribed; — rise naturally from the present Occasion, flow from the Nature and Course of Things, could seem to be no where so properly applied as upon the present Subject, and are rather Part of the History or Fact, than speculative Truths; in *Tacitus*, besides the
Im-

Impropriety of the Application to the Speakers, the Sentiments themselves are too refined, cool, and abstracted for the Urgency of Business, and the Heat and Tide, or rather Storm of Action in which they are often introduced.

Livy is generous and open, like *Germanicus*. *Tacitus* dark and suspicious, like *Tiberius*. In *Livy* is a Complacency of Heart upon the Recital of any virtuous Deed, or the Success of any gallant Enterprize. He seems to join in the Applause given to extraordinary Merit, and to share in the Glory and Happiness procured by the Exertion of any distinguished Virtue. *Tacitus* seems to gratify a Keenness of Appetite, and Malignity of Spirit when he displays any enormous Villainy. He dwells with seeming Pleasure on the Faults and Follies of Mankind; — is fond of Scandal; easy of Belief where Wickedness is reported, but a very Infidel on the Part of Virtue; one would imagine, he scarce thought it had a Being in the World.

If an Insinuation is admitted against any Man's Character or Conduct in *Livy*, it seems purposely related to make his Innocence appear the brighter upon further Enquiry. *Livy* seems to act a natural and agreeable Part, when

he justifies, and vindicates injur'd Merit: If any good Quality is admitted in one of *Tacitus's* Characters, it seems but a prelude to the bad ones: If he allows something to Candour and Justice, it is but to gain Attention to his bolder Scandals. He applauds but in order to accuse; and never seems better pleas'd than when he blackens.

Livy would defend the worst of Men from unjust Slanders, and is willing to believe the best of Mankind. *Tacitus* conceals nothing that the worst of Men, from Passion, or wicked Views, say of the best; nay, frequently adds a Poignancy and witty Malice, to the Scandals thrown upon his best Characters.

Tacitus, like a *Dutch* Painter, draws the most ugly Likenesses; as *Livy* has ennobled his virtuous Characters, and given them an Air and Dignity, which perhaps mere Mortals never had.

Was I to paint their Faces (from their Characters as Writers) I should give to *Livy* an open, generous Countenance, with a full and benevolent Eye, a majestic and divine Air, tho' softened by the tenderer Passions, and humaner Virtues. If I hit his Mein aright, you would at first Sight take him for
your

your Friend, and the Friend of Virtue, Liberty and Mankind. By examining his Features more closely, you would conceive a greater Love and Esteem for him, and by dwelling on his Face you would be still the more captivated.

Tacitus I should distinguish by a dark, malevolent Aspect; with a Mixture of Craft, Trouble and Disorder in his Features;—such a Trouble, as proceeds from no Pity or tender Passion, but from Indignation, Chagrin, or Guilt. His Eye should be quick and lively, but squinting: You would take him for a deep and subtil Sharper, as he should seem to take you for a Pickpocket.

Was any but Mortal Agency concerned in the Productions of our two Authors, I should say, that upon Occasion, *Tacitus* might have had for his Prompter some unhappy Demon, and that *Livy's* Pen was directed by an Angel's Hand.

Livy writes with a Mind at Ease and in Temper. *Tacitus* like one under Vexation and Discontent. *Livy* transports you into a Kind of pleasing Enthusiasm. *Tacitus* perplexes, pains and shocks you. *Livy's* Heroes are Gods. *Tacitus's* Gods are Devils.

In

In the Annalist, you have Sophistry in Argument, Altercation in Dispute, an extravagant Greatness of Thought, an over-laboured Description, a false Tender, pointed Witticism, disjointed Sentiments and an affected Metaphor. In *Livy*, the Justness of Reason, the fine Imagination, the natural Description, the softest Humanity, the manly Wisdom, the good Heart, the clear Head, and an equal Style.— Beauty of Composition, Truth of Character, and a just Imitation of Nature in each particular.

Livy's History is that of a Republic, a State or Community with all its Connections, Interests, Dependencies, and various Fortune. *Tacitus* confines himself more to the Lives and Deaths of particular and sometimes private Men, their Virtues and Vices; which have not always a visible Connection with the Public.

The Annalist relates Things, without that Regularity, Order and Perspicuity, as well as void of that Complacency of Heart, which almost every where shews itself in our Historian. Let us make the best Apology we can for *Tacitus*, and ascribe his unhappy Manner to his unhappy Subject; which was itself a Scene of Vice, Misrule and Confusion; incapable

pable of being treated in that Order, which the Administrations of a regular State exhibit; and not fitted to inspire that Comfort, which the Review of *Roman* Virtue in its Ascent to Fame, — in its Ages of Gold naturally affords.

Livy had great Advantages, which *Tacitus* very justly laments the Loss of. That Period of History, which remains in *Livy*, is full of the grandest and most important Actions, and the brightest Examples. Reading his History, is like travelling through some delightful Wood, which has, besides a general Beauty, some particular Openings that give the most charming Views. Military Glory, disinterested Integrity, a Poverty that disgraces the Pride of Kings, an ardent Love of the Public, and extended Conquests are the Objects, that frequently meet your Eyes in perusing this illustrious Writer. In him you have Law, Order, Discipline, Simplicity of Manners, Love of true Glory, Dignity of Office, Majesty of Character, domestic Virtue, civil Accomplishments, honest Policy, and a growing Empire.

In *Tacitus* you have Misrule, Disorder and Artifice; selfish Passions, infamous Ends, Prostitution of Character, Meanness in Office, general Corruption of Morals, the Lustre
of

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of the *Roman* Name tarnished by the most abject Slavery at Home, and Rapine, Ambition, and Cowardice Abroad.

Hence it is, among other Causes, that you take up *Livy* with Pleasure; peruse him with Eagerness, and lay him down with Regret. *Tacitus* (after you are acquainted with his Manner and Subject) you enter upon as a Task, and consequently read him with Uneasiness, throw him by with Pleasure, and resume him with Reluctancy. *Livy* never tires; *Tacitus* does not often please. You might for Ages dwell with *Livy*. You may call by the Way on *Tacitus*. But good as the Entertainment sometimes proves, it will not engage or detain you long: You are more willing to be gone at last, than thankful for what you have received. For what virtuous and well-educated Spirit would choose to dwell with Vanity and Ill-nature, with the Horrors of Guilt and Tyranny, with a degenerate World, and with a slumbering Providence?

The Author of these Observations has at least the Satisfaction of having brought them to a Conclusion; and hopes he is hereby freed from any future Occasion of consulting this unhappy Writer.

F I N I S.

